

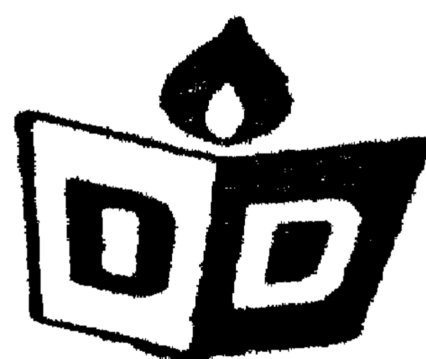
Swami Vivekananda

POLITICAL THINKERS OF MODERN INDIA

VOLUME TWENTY-FOUR

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Edited by
VERINDER GROVER
Former Reader, Deptt. of Political Science,
and Managing Editor, Indian Political Science Review,
University of Delhi, Delhi



DEEP & DEEP PUBLICATIONS
F-159, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027

ISBN 81-7100-570-5 (Vol 24)
ISBN 81-7100-577-2 (Set)

Composed by Shyam Composing Agency, 3190, Mohindra Park, Delhi-110034

Printed in India at Fine Prints, WZ-2016, Rani Bagh, Delhi-110034.

Published by DEEP & DEEP PUBLICATIONS, F-159, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027 Phones · 5435369, 504498

Man has an idea that there can be only one religion, that there can be only one Prophet, and that there can be only one incarnation, but that idea is not true By studying the lives of all these Great Messengers, we find that each was destined to play a part, as it were, and a part only, that the harmony consists in the sum total and not in one note As in the life of races, no race is born alone to enjoy the world None dare say so Each race has a part to play in this Divine Harmony of Nations Each race has its mission to perform its duty to fulfil. The sum total is Great Harmony

So, not any one of these Prophets is born to rule the world for ever None has yet succeeded and none is going to be the ruler for ever. Each only contributes a part, and, as to that part, it is true that in the long-run every Prophet will govern the world and its destinies.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

CONTENTS

PART II

PREFACE

It is seldom that an eminent luminary like Swami Vivekananda appears amongst mankind. His was a multi-faceted personality whose emotions, words and deeds exhibited profound harmony. Endowed with sharp intellect, noble heart, and a powerful mind, his whole being was ever centred on the amelioration of the suffering humanity

Narendranath Datta, who was later to be known as Swami Vivekananda, was born on January 12, 1863, in an upper middle class family of Calcutta His father, Viswanath Datta, was a solicitor, who had very good income Narendra was brought up in luxury, and his childhood was endowed with a spirit of daring and piety, mingled with sympathy for the poor, which distinguished him from other children A unique feature of his boyhood was his habit of deep meditation which he practised even at the tender age of five.

A spiritual personality like Swami Vivekananda cannot be claimed as an exclusive asset of any particular people. Vivekananda believed that there should be a universal religion and universal culture, and his sublime message about this was meant for humanity at large In preaching nationalism for India he never meant to annoy anyone His nationalism is the outcome of India's attempt to express itself in modern times Yet it has a universal significance for all lands, inasmuch as it sets forth a lofty ideal, gives a new dimension of vision and reveals a spiritual outlook. In this context Swami Vivekananda's programme of national reconstruction is of profound significance He roused the Indian nation from its deep slumber of centuries and gave it a nation-building faith and resolve

Swami Vivekananda's public life covered a very short period of nine years from 1893 to 1902. In 1893 he appeared at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and in 1902 he died in harness.

These were years of great physical and mental strain because of his extensive travels, adaptations to new environments, opposition from detractors both in India and abroad, incessant public lectures and private instructions, heavy load of correspondence and the burden of organising Ramakrishna Order in India

This book is divided into two parts Part I consists of selected speeches and writings of Swami Vivekananda and Part II consists of articles written by various authors assessing the contribution of Swami Vivekananda

This book is a systematic piecing together of articles contributed by scholars and specialists to the various journals of national and international repute I am specially grateful to the *Modern Review, Organiser, Udbodhana, Morning Star, Prabuddha Bharata, Sarvodaya, Swarajya, The Illustrated Weekly of India,* and *Indian Literature* from which I have drawn freely I express my deep sense of appreciation to all contributors for their scholarly papers and gratitude to the various librarians and eminent scholars in the field who extended their co-operation to me

New Delhi VERINDER GROVER

PART I

1

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF INDIA

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Existence cannot be produced by non-existence . . .

Non-existence can never be the cause of what exists. Something cannot come out of nothing That the law of causation is omnipotent and knows no time or place when it did not exist, is a doctrine as old as the Aryan race, sung by its ancient poet-seers, formulated by its philosophers and made the corner-stone upon which the Hindu man even of today builds his whole scheme of life

There was an inquisitiveness in the race to start with, which very soon developed into bold analysis, and though in the first attempt the work turned out might be like the attempts with shaky hands of the future master-sculptor, it very soon gave way to strict science, bold attempts and startling results

Its boldness made these men search every brick of their sacrificial altars, scan, cement and pulverise every word of their scriptures, arrange, re-arrange, doubt, deny or explain the ceremonies It turned their gods inside out, and assigned only a secondary place to their omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Creator of the universe, their ancestral. Father-in-heaven, or threw Him altogether overboard as useless and started a world-religion without Him with even now the largest following of any religion Is evolved the science of geometry from the arrangements of bricks to build various altars and startled the world with astronomical knowledge that arose from the attempts accurately

to time their worship and oblations. It made their contribution to the science of mathematics the largest of any race, ancient or modern, and their knowledge of chemistry, of metallic compounds in medicine, their scale of musical notes, their invention of the bow-instruments, of great service in the building of modern European civilisation. It led them to invent the science of building up the child mind through shining fables, which every child in every civilised country learns in a nursery or a school and carries an impress of through life.

Behind and before this analytical keenness, covering it as in a velvet sheath, was the other great mental peculiarity of the race—poetic insight. Its religion, its philosophy, its history, its ethics, its politics were all inlaid in a flower-bed of poetic imagery—the miracle of language which was called Sanskrit, or "perfected," lending itself to expressing and manipulating them better than any other tongue. The aid of melodious numbers was invoked even to express the hard facts of mathematics.

This analytical power and the boldness of poetical visions which urged it onward are the two great internal causes in the make-up of the Hindu race. They together formed, as it were, the keynote to the national character. This combination is what is always making the race press onwards beyond the senses—the secret of those speculations which are like the steel blades the artisans used to manufacture—cutting through bars of iron, yet pliable enough to be easily bent into a circle.

They wrought poetry in silver and gold; the symphony of jewels, the maze of marble wonders, the music of colours, the fine fabrics which belong more to the fairyland of dreams than to the real—have back of them thousands of years of working of this national trait.

Arts and sciences, even the realities of domestic life, are covered with a mass of poetical conceptions, which are pressed forward till the sensuous touches the supersensuous and the real gets the rose-hue of the unreal.

The earliest glimpses we have of this race show it already in the possession of this characteristic, as an instrument of some use in its hands. Many forms of religion and society must have been left behind in the onward march, before we find the race as depicted in the scriptures, the Vedas.

An organised pantheon, elaborate ceremonials, divisions of

society into hereditary classes necessitated by a variety of occupations, a great many necessaries and a good many luxuries of life are already there.

Most modern scholars are agreed that surroundings as to climate and conditions purely Indian were not yet working on the race.

Onward through several centuries, we come to a multitude surrounded by snows of the Himalayas on the north and the heat of the south—vast plains, interminable forests, through which mighty rivers roll their tides. We catch a glimpse of different races—Dravidians, Tartars, and Aboriginals pouring in their quota of blood, of speech, of manners and religions—and at last a great nation emerges to our view, still keeping the type of the Aryan; stronger, broader, and more organised by the assimilation.

We find the central assimilative core giving its type and character to the whole mass, clinging on with great pride to its name of "Aryan," and, though willing to give other races the benefits of its civilisation, it was by no means willing to admit them within the "Aryan" pale.

The Indian climate again gave a higher direction to the genius of the race. In a land where nature was propitious and yielded easy victories, the national mind started to grapple with and conquer the higher problems of life in the field of thought. Naturally the thinker, the priest, became the highest class in the Indian society, and not the man of the sword. The priests again, even at that dawn of history, put most of their energy in elaborating rituals; and when the nation began to find the load of ceremonies and lifeless rituals too heavy—came the first philosophical speculations, and the royal race was the first to break-through the maze of killing rituals.

On the one hand, the majority of the priests impelled by economical considerations were bound to defend that form of religion which made their existence a necessity of society and assigned them the highest place in the scale of caste; on the other hand, the king-caste, whose strong right hand guarded and guided the nation and who now found itself as leading in the higher thoughts also, were loath to give up the first place to men who only knew how to conduct a ceremonial. There were then others, recruited from both the priests and king-castes, who ridiculed

equally the ritualists and philosophers, declared spiritualism as fraud and priestcraft, and upheld the attainment of material comforts as the highest goal of life. The people, tired of ceremonials and wondering at the philosophers, joined in masses the materialists. This was the beginning of that caste question and that triangular fight in India between ceremonials, philosophy and materialism which has come down unsolved to our own days.

The first solution of the difficulty attempted was by applying the eclecticism which from the earliest days had taught the people to see in differences the same truth in various garbs. The great leader of this school, Krishna himself—of royal race--and his sermon, the Gita, have after various vicissitudes brought about by the upheavals of the Jains, the Buddhists and other sects, fairly established themselves as the "Prophet" of India and the truest philosophy of life. Though the tension was toned down for the time, it did not satisfy the social wants which were among the causes—the claim of the king-race to stand first in the scale of caste and the popular intolerance of priestly privilege. Krishna had opened the gates of spiritual knowledge and attainment to all irrespective of sex or caste, but he left undisturbed the same problem on the social side. This again has come down to our own days, inspite of the gigantic struggle of the Buddhists, Vaishnavas, etc., to attain social equality for all.

Modern India admits spiritual equality of all souls—but strictly keeps the social difference.

Thus we find the struggle renewed all along the line in the seventh century before the Christian era and finally in the sixth overwhelming the ancient order of things under Sakya Muni, the Buddha. In their reaction against the privileged priesthood Buddhists swept off almost every bit of the old ritual of the Vedas, subordinated the gods of the Vedas to the position of servants to their own human saints and declared the "Creator and Supreme Ruler" as an invention of priestcraft and superstition.

But the aim of Buddhism was reform of the Vedic religion by standing against ceremonials requiring offerings of animals, against hereditary caste, exclusive priesthood and against belief in permanent souls. It never attempted to destroy that religion, or overturn the social order. It introduced a vigorous method, by organising a class of Sannyasins into a strong monastic

brotherhood, and the Brahmavadinis into a body of nuns—by introducing images of saints in the place of altarfires.

It is probable that the reformers had for centuries the majority of the Indian people with them. The older forces were never entirely pacified, but they underwent a good deal of modification during the centuries of Buddhistic supremacy.

In ancient India the centres of national life were always the intellectual and spiritual and not political. Of old, as now, political and social power has been always subordinated to spiritual and intellectual. The outburst of national life was round colleges of sages and spiritual teachers We thus find the Samitis of the Panchalas, of the Kashyas (Benares), the Maithilas standing out as great centres of spiritual culture and philosophy, even in the Upanishads. Again these centres in turn became the focus of political ambition of the various divisions of the Aryans.

The great epic Mahabharata tells us of the war of the Kurus and Panchalas for supremacy over the nation, in which they destroyed each other. The spiritual supremacy veered round and centred in the East among the Magadhas and Maithilas, and after the Kuru-Panchala war a sort of supremacy was obtained by the kings of Magadha.

The Buddhist reformation and its chief field of activity were also in the same eastern region, and when the Maurya kings, forced possibly by the bar sinister on their escutcheon, patronised and led the new movement, the new priest power joined hands with the political power of the empire of Pataliputra. The popularity of Buddhism and its fresh vigour made the Maurya kings the greatest emperors that India ever had. The power of the Maurya sovereigns made Buddhism that world-wide religion that we see even today.

The exclusiveness of the old form of Vedic religions debarred it from taking ready help from outside. At the same time it kept it pure and free from many debasing elements which Buddhism in its propagandist zeal was forced to assimilate.

This extreme adaptability in the long-run made Indian Buddhism lose almost all its individuality, and extreme desire to be of the people made it unfit to cope with the intellectual forces of the mother religion in a few centuries The Vedic party in the meanwhile got rid of a good deal of its most objectionable features, as animal sacrifice, and took lessons from the rival

daughter in the judicious use of images, temple processions, and other impressive performances and stood ready to take within her fold the whole empire of Indian Buddhism already tottering to its fall.

And the crash came, with the Scythian invasions and the total destruction of the empire of Pataliputra.

The invaders, already incensed at the invasion of their central Asiatic home by the preachers of Buddhism, found in the sun-worship of the Brahmins a great sympathy with their own solar religion—and when the Brahminist party were ready to adapt and spiritualise many of the customs of the new-comers, the invaders threw themselves heart and soul into the Brahminic cause.

Then there is a veil of darkness and shifting shadows, there are tumults of war, rumours of massacres, and the next scene rises upon a new phase of things.

The empire of Magadha was gone. Most of northern India was under the rule of petty chiefs always at war with one another. Buddhism was almost extinct except in some eastern and Himalayan provinces and in the extreme south; and the nation after centuries of struggle against the power of a hereditary priest awoke to find itself in the clutches of a double priesthood of hereditary. Brahmins and exclusive monks of the new regime, with all the powers of the Buddhistic organisation and without their sympathy for the people.

A renascent India bought by the valour and blood of the heroic Rajputs, defined by the merciless intellect of a Brahmin from the same historical thought-centre of Mithila, led by a new philosophical impulse organised by Shankara and his bands of Sannyasins and beautified by the arts and literature of the courts of Malava—arose on the runs of the old.

The task before it was profound, problems vaster than any their ancestors had ever faced. A comparatively small and compact race, of the same blood and speech and the same social and religious aspiration, trying to save its unity by unscalable walls around itself, grew huge by multiplication and addition during the Buddhistic supremacy and was divided by race, colour, speech, spiritual instinct and social ambitions into hopelessly jarring factions. And this had to be unified and welded into one gigantic nation. The task Buddhism had also come to solve, and had taken it up when the proportions were not so vast.

So long it was a question of Aryanising the other types that were pressing for admission and thus out of different elements making a huge Aryan body. Inspite of concessions and compromises Buddhism was eminently successful and remained the national religion of India. But the time came when the allurements of sensual forms of worship, indiscriminately taken in along with various low races, were too dangerous for the central Aryan core, and a longer contact would certainly have destroyed the civilisation of the Aryans. Then came a natural reaction for self-preservation, and Buddhism as a separate sect ceased to live in most parts of its land of birth.

The reaction-movement led in close succession by Kumarilla in the north and Shankara and Ramanuja in the south has become the last embodiment of that vast accumulation of sects and doctrines and rituals called Hinduism. For the last thousand years or more, its great task has been assimilation, with now and then an outburst of reformation. This reaction first wanted to revive the rituals of the Vedas—failing which, it made the Upanishads or the philosophic portions of the Vedas its basis. It brought Vyasa's systems of Mimamsa philosophy and Krishna's sermon, the Gita, to the fore-front, and all succeeding movements have followed the same. The movement of Shankara forced its way through its high intellectuality, but it could be of little service to the masses, because of its adherence to strict caste-laws, very small scope for ordinary emotion, and making Sanskrit the only vehicle of communication. Ramanuja, on the other hand, with a most practical philosophy, a great appeal to the emotions, an entire denial of birthrights before spiritual attainments and appeals through the popular tongue, completely succeeded in bringing the masses back to the Vedic religion.

The northern reaction of ritualism was followed by the fitful glory of the Malava empire. With the destruction of that in a short time, northern India went to sleep as it were, for a long period, to be rudely awakened by the thundering onrush of Mohammedan cavalry across the passes of Afghanisthan In the south, however, the spiritual upheaval of Shankara and Ramanuja was followed by the usual Indian sequence of united races and powerful empires. It was the home of refuge of Indian religion and civilisation, when northern India from sea to sea lay bound at the feet of Central Asiatic conquerors. The Mohammedan tried

for centuries to subjugate the south, but can scarcely be said to have got even a strong foothold; and when the strong and united empire of the Moguls was very near completing its conquest, the hills and plateaus of the south poured in their bands of fighting peasant horsemen determined to die for the religion which Ramdas preached and Tuka sang, and in a short time the gigantic empire of the Moguls was only a name.

The movements in northern India during the Mohammedan period are characterised by their uniform attempt to hold the masses back from joining the religion of the conquerors—which brought in its train social and spiritual equality for all.

The friars of the orders founded by Ramananda, Kabir Dadu Chaitanya or Nanak were all agreed in preaching the equality of man, however differing from each other in philosophy. Their energy was for the most part spent in checking the rapid conquest of Islam among the masses, and they had very little left to give birth to new thoughts and aspirations. Though evidently successful in their purpose of keeping the masses within the folds of the old religion, and tempering the fanaticism of the Mohammedans, they were mere apologists, struggling to obtain permission to live.

One great prophet, however, arose in the north. Govind Singh, the last Guru of the Sikhs, with creative genius, and the result of his spiritual work was followed by the well-known political organisation of the Sikhs. We have seen throughout the history of India, a spiritual upheaval is almost always succeeded by a political unity extending over more or less area of the continent, which in its turn helps to strengthen the spiritual aspiration that brings it to being. But the spiritual aspiration that preceded the rise of the Mahratta or the Sikh empire was entirely reactionary. We seek in vain to find in the court of Poona or Lahore even a ray of reflection of that intellectual glory which surrounded the courts of the Moguls, much less the brilliance of Malava or Vidyanagar. It was intellectually the darkest period of Indian history, and both these meteoric empires, representing the upheaval of mass-fanaticism and hating culture with all their hearts lost all their motive power as soon as they had succeeded in destroying the rule of the hated Mohammedans.

Then there came again a period of confusion. Friends and foes, the Mogul empire and its destroyers, and the till then peaceful foreign traders. French and English, all joined in a

melee of fight For more than half a century there was nothing but war and pillage and destruction, and when the smoke and dust cleared, England was stalking victorious over the rest There has been half a century of peace, and law and order under the sway of Britain Time alone will prove if it is the order of progress or not

There have been a few religious movements amongst the Indian people during the British rule, following the same line that was taken up by northern Indian sects during the sway of the empire of Delhi They are the voices of the dead or the dying—the feeble tones of a terrorised people, pleading for permission to live They are ever eager to adjust their spiritual or social surroundings according to the tastes of the conquerors—if they are only left the right to live, especially the sects under the English domination, in which social differences with the conquering race are more glaring than the spiritual The Hindu sects of the century seem to have set one ideal of truth before them—the approval of their English masters No wonder that these sects have mushroom lives to live The vast body of the Indian people religiously hold aloof from them and the only popular recognition they get is the jubilation of the people when they die

But possibly for some time yet it cannot be otherwise.

2

MODERN INDIA*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The Vedic priests base their superior strength on the knowledge of the sacrificial Mantras.[1] By the power of these Mantras, the Devas are made to come down from their heavenly abodes, accept the drink and food offerings and grant the prayers of the Yajamanas.[2] The kings as well as their subjects are, therefore, looking up to these priests for their welfare during their earthly life. Raja Soma[3] is worshipped by the priest and is made to thrive by the power of his Mantras. As such, the Devas, whose favourite food is the juice of the Soma plant offered in oblation by the priest, are always kind to him and bestow his desired boons. Thus, strengthened by divine grace, he defies all human opposition, for, what can the power of mortals do against that of the Gods? Even the king, the centre of all earthly power, is a supplicant at his door. A kind look from him is the greatest help, his mere blessing a tribute to the State, pre-eminent above everything else.

Now commanding the king to be engaged in affairs fraught with death and ruin, now standing by him as his fastest friend with kind and wise counsels, now spreading the net of subtle, diplomatic statesmanship in which the king is easily caught—the priest is seen, oftentimes, to make the royal power totally subservient to him. Above all, the worst fear is in the knowledge

*From *Udbodhna*, March 1899.

that the name and fame of the royal forefathers and of himself and his family lie at the mercy of the priest's pen. He is the historian. The king might have paramount power, attaining a great glory in his reign, he might prove himself as the father and mother in one to his subjects—but if the priest is not appeased—his sun of glory goes down with his last breath, for ever; all his worth and usefulness deserving of universal approbation are lost in the great womb of Time, like unto the fall of gentle dew on the ocean. Others inaugurated the huge Sacrifices lasting over many years, the performers of the Ashvamedha and so on—those who showered, like incessant rain in the rainy season, countless wealth on the priests—their names, thanks to the grace of priests, are emblazoned in the pages of history. The name of Priyadarsi Dharmasok,[4] the beloved of the gods, is nothing but a name in the priestly world, while Janmejaya,[5] son of Parikshit, is a household word in every Hindu family.

To protect the State, to meet the expenses of the personal comforts and luxuries of himself and his long retinue, and, above all, to fill to overflowing the coffers of the all-powerful priesthood for its propitiation, the king is continually draining the resources of his subjects, even as the sun sucks up moisture from the earth. His especial prey—his milch cows—are the Vaisyas.

Neither under the Hindu kings, nor under the Buddhist rule, do we find the common subject-people taking any part in expressing their voice in the affairs of the State True, Yudhishthira visits the houses of Vaisyas and even Sudras. when he is in Varanavata; true, the subjects are praying for the installation of Ramachandra to the regency of Ayodhya; nay, they are even criticising the conduct of Sita, and secretly making plans for the bringing about of her exile; but, as a recognised rule of the State they have no direct voice in the supreme Government. The power of the populace is struggling to express itself in indirect and disorderly ways, without any method. The people have not as yet the conscious knowledge of the existence of this power. There is neither the attempt on their part to organise it into a united action, not have they got the will to do so; there is also a complete absence of that capacity, that skill by means of which small and incoherent centres of force are united together, creating insuperable strength as their resultant.

Is this due to want of proper laws?—no, that is not it. There

are laws, there are methods, separately and distinctly assigned for the guidance of different departments of government, there are laws laid down in the minutest detail for everything, such as the collection of revenue, the management of the army, the administration of justice, punishments and rewards. But, at the root of all, is the injunction of the Rishi—the word of divine authority, the revelation of God coming through the inspired Rishi. The laws have, it can almost be said, no elasticity in them. Under the circumstances, it is never possible for the people to acquire any sort of education, by which they can learn to combine among themselves and be united for the accomplishment of any object for the common good of the people, or by which they can have the concerned intellect to conceive the idea of popular right in the treasures collected by the king from his subjects or even such education by which they can be fired with the aspiration to gain the right of representation in the control of State revenues and expenditure. Why should they do such things ? Is not the inspiration of the Rishi responsible for their prosperity and progress ?

Again, all those laws are in books. Between laws as codified in books and their operation in practical life, there is a world of difference. One Ramachandra is born after thousands of Agnivarnas[6] pass away ! Many kings show us the life of Chandasoka;[7] Dharmasokas are rare ! The number of kings like Akbar, in whom the subjects find their life, is far less than that of kings like Aurangzeb, who live on the blood of their people !

Even if the kings be of as godlike nature as that of Yudhishthira, Ramachandra, Dharmasoka or Akbar, under whose benign rule the people enjoyed safety and prosperity, and were looked after with paternal care by their rulers, the hand of him who is always fed by another gradually loses the power of taking the food to his mouth. His power of self-preservation can never become fully manifest, who is always protected in every respect by another. Even the strongest youth remains but a child, if he is always looked after as a child by his parents. Being always governed by kings of goodlike nature, for whom is left the whole duty of protecting and providing for the people, they can never get any occasion for understanding the principles of self-government. Such a nation, being entirely dependent on the king for everything and never earning to exert itself for the common good or, for

self-defence, becomes gradually destitute of inherent energy and strength. If this state of dependence and protection continues long, it becomes the cause of the destruction of the nation, and its ruin is not far to seek

Of course, it can be reasonably concluded that, when the government of a country is guided by codes of laws, enjoined by Shastras which are the outcome of knowledge inspired by the divine genius of great sages, such a government must lead to the unbroken welfare of the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the king and the subjects alike But we have seen already how far the operation of those laws was, or may be, possible in practical life ! The voice of the ruled in the government of their land—which is the watchword of the modern Western world, and, of which, the last expression has been echoed with a thundering voice in the Declaration of the American Government, in the words, "That the government of the people of this country must be by the people and for the good of the people,"—cannot however be said to have been totally unrecognised in ancient India The Greek travellers and others saw many independent small States scattered all over this country, and references are also found, to this effect, in many places of the Buddhistic literature. And there cannot be the least doubt about it, that the germ of self-government was at least present in the shape of the village Panchayat,[8] which is still to be found in existence in many places of India. But the germ remained for ever the germ; the seed though put in the ground never grew into a tree. This idea of self-government never passed beyond the embryo state of the village Panchayat system, and never spread into society at large.

In the religious communities, among Sannyasins in the Buddhist monasteries, we have ample evidence to show that self-government was fully developed Even now, one, wonders to see how the power of the Panchayat system, of the principles of self-government, is working amongst the Naga Sannyasins—what deep respect the "Government by the Five" commands from them, what effective individual rights each Naga can exercise within his own sect, what excellent working of the power of organisation and concerted action they have among themselves !

With the deluge which swept the land by the advent of Buddhism, the priestly power fell into decay and the royal power was in the ascendant. Buddhist priests are renouncers of the

world, living in monasteries as homeless ascetics unconcerned with secular affairs. They have neither the will nor the endeavour to bring and keep the royal power under their control, through the threat of outset or magic arrows. Even if there were any remnant of such a will, its fulfilment has now become an impossibility. For, Buddhism has shaken the thrones of all the oblation-eating gods and brought them down from their heavenly positions. The state of being a Buddha is superior to the heavenly positions of many a Brahma or an Indra, who vie with each other in offering their worship at the feet of the Buddha, the God-man ! And to this Buddhahood, every man has the privilege to attain; it is open to all, even in this life. From the descent of the gods, as a natural consequence, the superiority of the priests who were supported by them, is gone.

Accordingly, the reins of that mighty sacrificial horse—the royal power—are no longer held in the firm grasp of the Vedic priest, and being now free it can roam anywhere by its unbridled will. The centre of power, in this period, is neither with the priests, chanting the Sama hymns and performing the Yajnas according to the Yajur Veda; nor is the power vested in the hands of Kshatriya kings, separated from each other and ruling over small independent States. But the centre of power in this age is in emperors whose unobstructed sway extend over vast areas bounded by the ocean, covering the whole of India from one end to the other. The leaders of this age are no longer Visvamitra or Vasishtha, but emperors like Chandragupta, Dharmasoka and others. There never were emperors who ascended the throne of India and led her to the pinnacle of her glory such as those lords of the earth who ruled over her in paramount sway during the Buddhistic period. The end of this period is characterised by the appearance of Rajput power on the scene, and the rise of modern Hinduism. With the rise of Rajput power, on the decline of Buddhism, the sceptre of the Indian empire, dislodged from its paramount power, was again broken into a thousand pieces and wielded by small powerless hands. At this time, the Brahmanical (priestly) power again succeeded in raising its head, not as an adversary as before, but this time as an auxiliary to the total supremacy.

During this revolution, that perpetual struggle for supremacy between the priestly and the royal classes, which began from the

Vedic time and continued through ages till it reached its climax at the time of Jain and Buddhist revolutions, has ceased for ever. Now these two mighty powers are friendly to each other; but neither is there any more that glorious Kshatra (warlike) valour of the kings, nor that spiritual brilliance which characterised the Brahmanas; each has lost his former intrinsic strength. As might be expected, this new union of the two forces was soon engaged in the satisfaction of mutual self-interest, and became dissipated by spending its vitality on extirpating their common opponents, especially the Buddhist of the time, and on similar other deeds. Being steeped in all the vices consequent on such a union, e g., the sucking of the blood of the masses, taking revenge on the enemy, spoilation of others property, etc , they in vain tried to imitate the Rajasuya and other Vedic sacrifices of the ancient kings, and only made a ridiculous farce of them. The result was that they were bound hand and food by a formidable train of sycophantic attendance and its obsequious flatteries, and being entangled in an interminable net of rites and ceremonies with flourishes of Mantras and the like, they soon became a cheap and ready prey to the Mohammedan invaders from the West.

That priestly power which began its strife for superiority with the royal power from the Vedic times and continued it down the ages, that hostility against the Kshatra power, Bhagavan Sri Krishna succeeded by his super-human genius in putting a stop to, at least for the time being, during his earthly existence. That Brahmanya power was almost effaced from its field of work in India, during the Jain and Buddhist revolutions, or, perhaps, was holding its feeble stand, by being subservient to the strong antagonistic religions. That Brahmanya power, since the appearance of Rajput power which held sway over India under the Mihira dynasty and others, made its last effort to recover its lost greatness; and in its effort to establish that supremacy, it sold itself at the feet of the fierce hordes of barbarians, newly come from Central Asia, and to win their pleasure introduced in the land their hateful manners and customs. Moreover, it, the Brahmanya power, solely devoting itself to the easy means to dupe ignorant barbarians, brought into vogue mysterious rites and ceremonies backed by its new Mantras and the like, and in doing so itself lost its former wisdom, its former vigour and vitality, and its own chaste habits of long acquirement. Thus, it turned the whole

Aryavarta into a deep and vast whirlpool of the most vicious, the most horrible, the most abominable, barbarous customs; and as the inevitable consequence of countenancing these detestable customs and superstitions, it soon lost all its own internal strength and stamina, and became the weakest of the weak. What wonder that it should be broken into a thousand pieces and fall, at the mere touch of the storm of Mussalman invasions from the West! That great Brahmanya power fell—who knows, if ever to rise again ?

The resuscitation of the priestly power under the Mussalman rule, was, on the other hand, an utter impossibility. The Prophet Mahomed himself was dead against the priestly class in any shape, and tried his best for the total destruction of this power by formulating rules and injunctions to that effect. Under the Mussalman rule the king himself was the supreme priest; he was the chief guide in religious matters; and, when he became the emperor, he cherished the hope of being the paramount leader in all matters, over the whole Mussalman world. To the Mussalman, the Jew or the Christian is not an object of extreme detestation; they are, at the worst, men of little faith. But not so the Hindu. According to him the Hindu is idolatrous, the hateful Kafir; hence, in this life he deserves to be butchered; and in the next, eternal hell is in store for him. The utmost the Mussalman kings could do as a favour to the priestly class—the spiritual guides of these Kafirs—was to allow them somehow to pass their life silently and wait for the last moment. This was again sometimes considered too much kindness ! If the religious ardour of any king was a little more uncommon, there would immediately follow arrangements for a great Yajna, by way of Kafir-slaughter !

On one side, the royal power is now centred in kings, professing a different religion and given to different customs. On the other, the priestly power has been entirely displaced from its influential position as the controller and law-giver of the society. The Koran and its code of laws have taken the place of the Dharma Shastras of Manu and others. The Sanskrit language has made room for the Persian and the Arabic. The Sanskrit language has to remain confined only to the purely religious writings and religious matters of the conquered and detested Hindu, and, as such, has since been living a precarious life at the hands of the neglected priest. The priest himself, the relic of the Brahmanya

power, fell back upon the last resource of conducting only the comparatively unimportant family ceremonies, such as the matrimonial, etc., and that also only so long and as much as the mercy of the Mohammedan rulers permitted.

In the Vedic and the adjoining periods, the royal power could not manifest itself, on account of the grinding pressure of the priestly power. We have seen how, during the Buddhistic revolution, resulting in the fall of the Brahmanical supremacy, the royal power in India reached its culminating point. In the interval between the fall of the Buddhistic and the establishment of the Mohammedan empire, we have seen how the royal power was trying to raise its head through the Rajputs in India, and how it failed in its attempt At the root of this failure, too, could be traced the same old endeavours of the Vedic priestly class to bring back and revive with a new life their original (ritualistic) days.

Crushing the Brahmanical supremacy under his feet, the Mussalman king was able to restore, to a considerable extent, the lost glories of such dynasties of emperors as the Maurya, the Gupta, the Andhra and the Kshatrapa.[9]

Thus, the priestly power—which sages like Kumarilla, Sankara and Ramanuja tried to re-establish, which, for some time, was supported by the sword of the Rajput power, and tried to rebuild its structure on the fall of its Jain and Buddhist adversaries—was, under Mohammedan rule, laid to sleep for ever, knowing no awakening. In this period, the antagonism or warfare is not between kings and priests but between kings and kings. At the end of this period, when Hindu power again raised its head, and, to some extent, was successful in regenerating Hinduism through the Mahrattas and the Sikhs, we do not find much play of the priestly power with these regenerations. On the contrary, when the Sikhs admitted any Brahman into their sect, they, at first, compelled him publicly to give up his previous Brahmanical signs and adodt the recognised signs of their own religion

In this manner, after an agelong play of action and reaction between these two forces, the final victory of the royal power was echoed on the soil of India for several centuries, in the name of foreign monarchs professing an entirely different religion from the faith of the land. But at the end of this Mohammedan period, another entirely new power made its appearance on the arena, and slowly began to assert its prowess in the affairs of the Indian

world.

This power is so new, its nature and workings are so foreign to the Indian mind, its rise so inconceivable, and its vigour so insuperable, that though it wields the suzerain power up till now, only a handful of Indians understand what this power is.

We are talking of the occupation of India by England.

From very ancient times, the fame of India's vast wealth and her rich granaries has enkindled in many powerful foreign nations the desire for conquering her. She has been, in fact, again and again conquered by foreign nations. Then why should we say that the occupation of India by England was something new and foreign to the Indian mind ?

From time immemorial Indians have seen the mightiest royal power tremble before the frown of the ascetic priest, devoid of worldly desire, armed with spiritual strength, the power of Mantras (sacred for mulae) and religious lore, and the weapon of curses. They have also seen the subject people silently obey the commands of their heroic all-powerful suzerains backed by their arms and armies like a flock of sheep before a lion. But that a handful of Vaisyas (traders) who, despite their great wealth, have ever crouched away stricken not only before the king but also before any member of the royal family, would unite, cross for purposes of business rivers and seas, would solely by virtue of their intelligence and wealth, by degrees make puppets of the long-established Hindu and Mohammedan dynasties; not only so, but that they would buy as well the services of the ruling powers of their own country, and use their valour and learning as powerful instruments for the influx of their own riches—this is a spectacle entirely novel to the Indians, as also the spectacle that the descendants of the mighty nobility of a country, of which a proud lord, sketched by the extraordinary pen of its great poet, says to a common man, "Out, dunghill ! darest thou brave a nobleman ?" would, in no distant future, consider it the zenith of human ambition to be sent to India as obedient servants of a body of merchants, called The East India Company:—such a sight was, indeed, a novelty unseen by India before !

According to the prevalence, in greater or lesser degree of the three qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, in man, for four castes, the Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra, are everywhere present at all times, in all civilised societies. By the mighty hand

of time, their number and power also vary at different times, in regard to different countries. In some countries the numerical strength or influence of one of these castes may preponderate over another; at some period, one of the classes may be more powerful than the rest. But from a careful study of the history of the world, it appears that, in conformity to the Law of Nature, the four castes, the Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra, do, in every society, one after another in succession, govern the world.

Among the Chinese, the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Chaldeans, the Aryas, the Iranians, the Jews, the Arabs—among all these ancient nations, the supreme power of guiding society is, in the first period of their history, in the hands of the Brahman, or the priest. In the second period, the ruling power is the Kshatriya, that is, either absolute monarchy, or oligarchical government by a chosen body of men. Among the modern Western nations, with England at their head, this power of controlling society has been, for the first time, in the hands of the Vaisyas, or mercantile communities, made rich through the carrying on of commerce

Though Troy and Carthage of ancient times, and Ventice and similar other small commercial States of comparatively modern times, became highly powerful, yet, amongst them, there was not the real rising of the Vaisya power, in the proper sense of the term.

Correctly speaking, the descendants of the royal family had the sole monopoly of the commerce of those old days, by employing the common people and their servants under them to carry on the trade and appropriate to themselves the profits accruing from it Excepting these few men no one was allowed to take any part, or voice an opinion even in the government of the country and kindred affairs. In the oldest countries like Egypt, the priestly power enjoyed unmolested supremacy only for a short period, after which it became subjugated to the royal power and lived as an auxiliary to it. In China, the royal power, centralised by the genius of Confucius, has been controlling and guiding the priestly power, in obedience to its absolute will, for more than twenty-five centuries, and during the last two centuries, the all-absorbing Lamas of Thibet, though they are the spiritual guides of the royal family, have been compelled to pass their days, being subject in every way to the Chinese Emperor.

In India, the royal power succeeded in conquering the priestly power and declaring its untrammelled authority long after the other ancient civilised nations had done so, and therefore, the inauguration of the Indian Empire came about long after the Chinese, Egyptian, Babylonian and other Empires had risen. It was only with the Jewish people that the royal power, though it tried hard to establish its supremacy over the priestly, had to meet a complete defeat in the attempt. Not even the Vaisyas attained the ruling power with the Jew. On the other hand, the common subject people, trying to free themselves from the shackles of priestcraft, were crushed to death, under the internal commotion of adverse religious movements like Christianity and the external pressure of the mighty Roman Empire.

As in the ancient days, the priestly power, in spite of its long-continued struggle, was subdued by the more powerful royal power, so, in modern times, before the violent blow of the newly-risen Vaisya power, many a kingly crown has to kiss the ground, many a sceptre is for ever broken to pieces. Only those few thrones which are allowed still to exercise some power in some of the civilised countries, and make a display of their royal pomp and grandeur, are all maintained solely by the vast hordes of wealth of these Vaisya communities—the dealers in salt, oil, sugar and wine—and kept up as a magnificent and imposing front, and as a means of glorification to the really governing body behind—the Vaisyas.

That mighty newly-arisen Vaisya power,—at whose command, electricity carries messages in an instant from one pole to another, whose highway is the vast ocean, with its mountain-high waves, at whose instance, commodities are being carried with the greatest ease from one part of the globe to another, and at whose mandate, even the greatest monarchs tremble—on the white foamy crest of that huge wave—the all-conquering Vaisya—power—is installed, in all its grandeur, the majestic throne of England.

Therefore, the conquest of India by England is not conquest by Jesus or the Bible, as we are often asked to believe, neither is it like the conquest of India by the Moguls and the Pathans. But behind the name of the Lord Jesus, the Bible, the magnificant palaces, the heavy tramp of the feet of armies consisting of elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry, shaking the earth, the sounds of war trumpets bugles and drums, and the splendid

display of the royal throne, behind all these, there is always the virtual presence of England—that England, whose war-flag is the factory chimney, whose troops are the merchantmen, whose battle-fields are the market-places of the world, and whose Empress is the shining Goddess Fortune herself ! It is on this account I have said before, that it is indeed an unseen novelty, this conquest of India by England What new revolution will be effected in India by her clash with the new giant power, and as the result of that revolution what new transformation is in store for future India, cannot be inferred from her past history.

I have stated previously that the four castes, Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra do, in succession, rule the world. During the period of supreme authority exercised by each of these castes, some acts are accomplished, which conduce to the welfare of the people, while others are injurious to them.

The foundation of the priestly power rests on intellectual strength and not on the physical strength of arms. Therefore, with the supremacy of the priestly power, there is a great prevalence of intellectual and literary culture. Every human heart is always anxious for communication with, and help from, the super-sensuous spiritual world. The entrance to that world is not possible for the generality of mankind; only a few great souls, who can acquire a perfect control over their sense organs, and who are possessed with a nature preponderating with the essence of Sattva Guna, are able to pierce the formidable wall of Matter and come face to face, as it were, with the super-sensuous—it is only they who know the workings of that kingdom, bring messages from it and show the way to others. These great souls are the priests, the primitive guides, leaders and movers of human societies.

The priest knows the goals and communicates with them; he is therefore worshipped as a god. Leaving behind the thoughts of the world, he has no longer to devote himself to earning of his bread by the sweat of his brow. The best and foremost parts of all food and drink are due as offerings to the gods, and these gods, the visible proxies on earth, are the priests. It is through their mouths that they partake of the offerings. Knowingly, or unknowingly, society gives the priest abundant leisure, and he can therefore get the opportunity of being meditative and of thinking higher thoughts. Hence, the development of wisdom and learning originates first with the supremacy of the priestly power. There

stands the priest between the dreadful lion—the king—on the one hand, and the terrified flock of sheep—the subject people—on the other. The destructive leap of the lion is checked by the controlling rod of spiritual power in the hands of the priest. The flame of the despotic will of the king, maddened in the pride of his wealth and men, is able to burn into ashes everything that comes in his way; but it is only a word from the priest, who has neither wealth nor men behind him but whose sole strength is his spiritul power, that can quench the despotic royal will, as water the fire.

With the ascendency of the priestly supremacy, are seen the first advent of civilisation, the first victory of the divine nature over the animal, the first conquest of spirit over matter, and the first manifestation of the divine power, which is potentially present in this very slave of nature, this lump of flesh, to wit, the human body. The priest is the first discriminator of spirit from matter, the first help to bring his world in communion with the next, the first messenger from the gods to man, and the intervening bridge that connects the king with this subjects. The first offshoot of universal welfare and good is nursed by his spiritual power, by the devotion to learning and wisdom by his renunciation, the watch-word of his life, nay, watered even by the flow of his own life-blood. It is therefore that in every land it was he to whom the first and foremost worship was offered. It is therefore that even his memory is sacred to us !

There are evils as well. With the growth of life is sown simultaneously the seed of death. Darkness and light always go together. There are great evils, indeed, which, if not checked in proper time, lead to the ruin of society. The play of power through gross matter appeals to universal experience; everyone sees, everyone understands, the mighty manifestation of gross material force as displayed in the play of battle-axes and swords, or in the burning properties of fire and lighting. Nobody doubts these things, nor can there ever be any question about their genuiness. But, where the repository of power and the centre of its play are wholly mental, where the power is confined to certain special words, to certain special modes of ultering them, to the mental repetition of certain mysterious syllables, or to other similar processes and applications of the mind, there, light is mixed with shade, there, the ebb and flow naturally disturb the otherwise unshaken faith, and there, even when things are actually

seen or directly perceived, still, sometimes doubts arise as to their real occurence. Where distress, fear, anger, malice, spirit of retaliation and the like passions of man, leaving the palpable force of arms, leaving the gross material methods to gain the end in view, which everyone can understand, substitute in their stead the mysterious mental processes like Stambhana, Uchchatana, Vasikarana and Marana[10], for their fructification—there, a cloud of smoky indistinctness, as it were, naturally envelops the mental atmosphere of those men who often live and move in such misty worlds of obscure mysticism. No straight line of action presents itself before such a mind; even if it does, the mind distorts it into crookedness. The final result of all this is insincerity,—that very limited narrowness of the heart—and above all, the most fatal is the extreme intolerance born of mallicious envy at the superior excellence of another.

The priest naturally says to himself : "Why should I part with the power that has made the Devas subservient to me, has given me mystery over physical and mental illnesses, and has gained for me the service of ghosts, demons and other unseen spirits ? I have dearly bought this power by the price of extreme renunciation Why should I give to others that to get which I had to give up my wealth, name, fame, in short, all my earthly comforts and happiness ?" Again, the power is entirely mental. And how many opportunities are there of keeping it a perfect secret ! Entangled in this wheel of circumstances, human nature becomes what it inevitably should be, being use to practise constant self-concealment, it becomes a victim of extreme selfishness and hypocrisy, and last succumbs to the poisonous consequences which they bring in their train. In time, the reaction of this very desire to concealment redounds upon oneself. All knowledge, all wisdom, is almost lost, for want of proper exercise and diffusion, and what little remains, is thought to have been obtained from some supernatural source; and, therefore, far from making fresh efforts to go in for originality and gain knowledge of new sciences, it is considered unless and futile to attempt even to improve the remnants of the old by cleansing them of their corruptions. Thus lost to former wisdom, the former indomitable spirit of self-reliance, the priest, now glorifying himself merely in the name of his forefathers, vainly struggles to preserve un-tarnished for himself the same glory, the same privilege the same veneration

and the same supremacy as was enjoyed by his great forefathers. Consequently, his violent collision with the other castes.

According to the law of nature, wherever there is an awakening of a new and stronger life, there it tries to conquer and take the place of the old and the decaying. Nature favours the dying out of the unfit and the survival of the fittest. The final result of such conflict between the priestly and the other classes has been mentioned already.

That renunciation, self-control and asceticism of the priest, which, during the period of his ascendency, were devoted to the pursuance of earnest researches of truth, are, on the eve of his decline, employed anew and spent solely in the accumulation of objects of self-gratification and in the extension of privileged superiority over others. That power, the centralisation of which in himself gave him all honour and worship, has now been dragged down from its high heavenly position to the lowest abyss of hell. Having lost sight of the goal, drifting aimless, the priestly power is entangled, like the spider, in the web spun by itself. The chain that has been forged from generation to generation, with the greatest care, to be put on others' feet, is now tightened round its own in a thousand coils, and is thwarting its own movement in hundreds of ways. Caught in the endless thread of the net of infinite rites, ceremonies and customs, which it spread on all sides as external means for purification of the body and the mind with a view to keep society in the iron grasp of these innumerable bonds —the priestly power, thus hopelessly entangled from head to foot, is now asleep in despair ! There is no escaping out of it now. Tear the net and the priesthood of the priest is shaken to its foundation ! There is implanted in every man, naturally, a strong desire for progress, and those who, finding that the fulfilment of this desire is an impossibility so long as one is trammelled in the shackless of presthood, rend this net and take to the profession of other castes in order to earn money thereby—them, the society immediately dispossesses of their priestly rights. Society has no faith in the Brahmanness of the so-called Brahmans who, instead of keeping the Shikha,[11] part their hair, who, giving up their ancient habits and ancestral customs, clothe themselves in semi-European dress and adopt the newly introduced usages from the West, in a hybrid fashion. Again, in those parts of India, wherever this new-comer, the English Government, is introducing new

modes of education and opening up new channels for the coming in of wealth, there, hosts of Brahman youths are giving up their hereditary priestly profession, and trying to earn their livelihood and become rich by adopting the callings of other castes, with the result that the habits and customs of the priestly class, handed down their distant forefathers, are scattered to the winds and are fast disappearing from the land.

In Gujarat, each secondary sect of the Brahmans is divided into-two sub-divisions, one being of those who still stick to the priestly profession, while the other lives by other professions. There, only the first sub-divisions, carrying on the priestly profession, are called "Brahmans," and, though the other sub-divisions are, by lineage, descendants from Brahman fathers, yet the former do not link themselves in matrimonial relation with the latter. For example, by the name of "Nagara Brahman," are meant only those Brahmans who are priests living on alms; and by the name "Nagara" only, are meant those Brahmans who have accepted service under the Government, or those who have been carrying on the Vaisya's profession. But it appears that such distinctions will not long continue in these days, in Gujarat. Even the sons of the "Nagara Brahmans" are nowadays getting English education and entering into Government service, or adopting some mercantile business. Even orthodox Pandits of the old school, undergoing pecuniary difficulties, are sending their sons to the colleges of the English universities, or making them choose the callings of Vaidyas, Kayasthas and other non-Brahman castes If the current of affairs goes on running in this course, then it is a question of most serious reflection, no doubt, how long more will the priestly class continue on India's soil. Those who lay the fault of attempting to bring down the supremacy of the priestly class at the door of any particular person, or body of persons, other than themselves, ought to know that, in obedience to the inevitable Law of Nature, the Brahman caste is erecting, with its own hands, its own sepulchre; and this is what ought to be. It is good and appropriate that every caste of high birth and privileged nobility should make it its principal duty to raise its own funeral pyre with its own hands.

Accumulation of power is as necessary as its diffusion, or rather more so The accumulation of blood in the heart is an indispensable condition for life—its non-circulation throughout

the body means death. For the welfare of society, it is absolutely necessary, at certain times, to have all knowledge and power concentrated in certain families or castes, to the exclusion of others, but that concentrated power is focussed for the time being only to be scattered broadcast over the whole of society in future. If this diffusion be withheld, the destruction of that society is, without doubt, near at hand.

On the other side, the king is like the lion; in him are present both the good and evil propensities of the lord of beasts. Never for a moment his fierce nails are held back from tearing to pieces the heart of innocent animals living on herbs and grass, to allay his thirst for blood, when occasion arises; again, the poet says, though himself striken with old age and dying with hunger, the lion never kills the weakest fox that throws itself in his arms for protection. If the subject classes, for a moment, stand as impediments in the way of the gratification of the senses of the royal lion, their death-knell is inevitably tolled; if they humbly bow down to his commands, they are perfectly safe. Not only so. Not to speak of ancient days, even in modern times, no society can be found in any country where the effectiveness of individual self-sacrifice for the good of the many, and of the oneness of purpose and endeavour actuating every member of the society for the common good of the whole, has been fully realised. Hence the necessity of the kings, who are the creations of the society itself. They are the centres where all the forces of society, otherwise loosely scattered about, are made to converge and from which they start and course through the body politic and animate society.

As during the Brahmanical supremacy, at the first stage is the awakening of the first impulse for search after knowledge, and later, the continual and careful fostering of the growth of that impulse still in its infancy—so, during the Kshatriya supremacy, a strong desire for pleasure pursuits has made its appearance at the first stage, and later have sprung up inventions and developments of arts and sciences, as the means for its gratification. Can the king in the height of his glory hide his proud head within the lowly cottages of the poor ? Or can the common food of his subjects ever minister to his royal appetite with satisfaction ?

He whose dignity bears no comparison with any one else on earth, he who is divinity residing in the temple of the human body—for the common man, to cast even a mere glance at his—

the king's—objects of pleasure is a great sin to think of ever possessing them is quite out of the question. The body of the king is not like the bodies of other people, it is too sacred to be polluted by any contamination; in certain countries it is even believed never to come under the sway of death. A halo of equal sacredness shines around the queen, so she is scrupulously guarded from the gaze of the common folk, not even the sun may cast a glance on her beauty ! Hence, the rising of magnificent palaces to take the place of thatched cottages. The sweet harmonious strain of artistic music, flowing as it were from heaven, silenced the disorderly jargon of the rabble. Delightful gardens, pleasant groves, beautiful galleries, charming paintings, exquisite sculptures fine and costly apparel began to displace, by gradual steps, the natural beauties of rugged woods and the rough and coarse dress of the simple rustic Thousands of intelligent men left the toilsome task of the ploughman and turned their attention to the new field of fine arts, where they could display the finer play of their intellect in the less laborious and easier ways. Villages lost their importance—cities rose in their stead.

It was in India, again, that the kings, after having enjoyed for some time earthly pleasures to their full satisfaction, were stricken at the latter part of their lives with heavy world-weariness, as is sure to follow on extreme sense-gratification: and thus being satiated with worldly pleasures, they retired at their old age into secluded forests and there began to contemplate the deep problems of life The results of such renunciation and deep meditation were marked by a strong dislike for cumbrous rites and ceremonials, and an extreme devotion to the highest spiritual truths which we find embodied in the Upanishads, the Gita and the Jaina and the Bauddha Scriptures. Here also was a great conflict between the priestly and the royal powers. Disappearance of the elaborate rites and ceremonials meant a death-blow to the priest's profession. Therefore, naturally, at all times and in every country, the priests gird up their loins and try their best to preserve the ancient customs and usages, while, on the other side, stand, in opposition, kings like Janaka, backed by Kshatriya prowess as well as spiritual power. We have dwelt at length already on this bitter antagonism between the two parties.

As the priest is busy about centralising all knowledge and learning at a common centre, to wit, himself, so the king is ever

up and doing in collecting all the earthly powers and focussing them in a central point, i e., his own self. Of course, both are beneficial to society. At one time they are both needed for the common good of society, but that is only at its infant stage. But, if attempts be made, when society has passed its infant stage and reached its vigorous youthful condition, to clothe it by force with the dress which suited it in its infancy, and keep it bound within narrow limits, then either it bursts the bonds by virtue of its own strength and tries to advance, or where it fails to do so, it retraces its footsteps and, by slow degrees, returns to its primitives uncivilised condition.

Kings are like parents to their subjects, and the subjects are the kings children. The subjects should, in every respect, look up to the king, and stick to their king with unreserved obedience, and the king should rule them with impartial justice and look to their welfare, and bear the same affection towards them as he would towards his own children. But what rule applies to individual homes, applies to the whole society as well, for society is only the aggregate of individual homes. "When the son attains the age of sixteen, the father ought to deal with him as his friend and equal,"[12]—if that is the rule, does not the infant society ever attain that age of sixteen ? It is the evidence of history that at a certain time every society attains its manhood, when a strong conflict ensues between the ruling power and the common people. The life of the society, its expansion and civilisation, depend on its victory or defeat in this conflict.

Such changes revolutionising society have been happening in India again and again, only in this country they have been effected in the name of religion, for religion is the life of India, religion is the language of this country, the symbol of all its movements. The Charvaka, the Jaina, the Bauddha, Sankara, Ramanuja, Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj—of all these and similar other sects, the wave of religion, foaming, thundering, surging, breaks in the front, while in the rear follows he filling-up of social wants. If all desires can be accomplished by the mere utterance of some meaningless syllables, then who will exert himself and go through difficulties to work out the fulfilment of his desires ? If this malady entres into the entire body of any social system, then that society becomes slothful and indisposed to any exertion, and soon hastens to its ruin Hence

the slashing sarcasm of the Charvakas, who believed only in the reality of sense-perceptions and nothing beyond. What could have saved Indian society from the ponderous burden of omnifarious ritualistic ceremonialism with its animal and other sacrifices, which all but crushed the very life out of it, except the Jaina revolution, which took its strong stand exclusively on chaste morals and philosophical truths ?—or without the Bauddha revolution, what would have delivered the suffering millions of the lower classes from the violent tyrannies of the influential higher castes ? When, in course of time, Buddhism declined and its extremely pure and moral character gave place to equally bad, unclean and immoral practices, when Indian society trembled under the internal dance of the various races of barbarians who were allowed into the Buddhistic fold by virtue of its universal all-embracing spirit of equality—then Sankara, and later Ramanuja, appeared on the scene and tried their best to bring society back to its former days of glory and re-establish its lost status. Again, it is an undoubted fact, that if there had not been the advent of Kabir, Nanak, and Chaitanya, in the Mohammedan period and the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj in our own day, then, by this time, the Mohammedans and the Christians would have far outnumbered the Hindus of the present day in India.

What better material is there than nourishing food to build up the body composed of various elements, and the mind which sends out infinite waves of thought ? But if that food which goes to sustain the body and strengthen the mind is not properly assimilated, and the natural functions of the body do not work properly, then that very thing becomes the root of all evil.

The individual's life is in the life of the whole, the individual's happiness is in the happiness of the whole, apart from the whole, the individual's existence is inconceivable—this is an eternal truth, and is the bed-rock on which the universe is built. To move slowly towards the infinite whole, bearing a constant feeling of intense sympathy and sameness with it, being happy with its happiness and being distressed in its affliction, is the individual's sole duty. Not only is it his duty, but in its transgression is his death, while compliance with this great truth leads to life immortal This is the law of Nature, and who can throw dust into her ever-watchful eyes ? None can hoodwink society and

deceive it for any length of time. However much there may have accumulated heaps of refuse and mud on the surface of society—still, at the bottom of those heaps the life-breath of society is ever to be found pulsating with the vibrations of universal love and self-denying compassion for all. Society is like the earth that patiently bears incessant molestation; but she wakes up one day, however long that may be in coming, and the force of the shaking tremors of that awakening hurls off to a distance the accumulated dirt of self-seeking meanness, piled up during millions of patient and silent years !

We ignore this sublime truth and though we suffer a thousand times for our folly, yet, in our absurd foolishness, impulsed by the brute in us, we do not believe in it. We try to deceive, but a thousand times we find we are deceived ourselves, and yet we do not desist ! Mad that we are, we imagine we can impose on nature ! With our short-sighted vision we think ministering to the self at any cost is the be-all and end-all of life.

Wisdom, knowledge, wealth, men, strength, prowess, and whatever else nature gathers and provides us with, are all only for diffusion, when the moment of need is at hand. We often forget this fact. Put the stamp of "*mine only*" upon the entrusted deposits, and, *pari passu,* we sow the seed of our own ruin !

The king, the centre of the forces of the aggregate of his subjects, soon forgets that those forces are only stored with him so that he may increase and give them back a thousand-fold in their potency, with the result that they may spread over the whole community for its good. As tributing all godship to himself, in his pride, like the king Vena[13] he looks upon other people as wretched specimens of humanity who should grovel before him; any opposition to his will, whether good or bad, is a great sin on the part of his subjects. Hence, oppression steps into the place of protection—sucking their blood in place of preservation. If the society is week and debilitated, it silently suffers all ill-treatment at the hands of the king, and as the natural consequence, both the king and his people go down and down and fall into the most degraded state, and thus become an easy prey to any nation stronger than themselves. Where the society is healthy and strong there soon follows a fierce contest between the king and his subjects, and by its reaction and convulsion, are flung away the sceptre and the crown, and the throne and the royal paraphernalia

become like past curiosities preserved in the museum galleries.

As the result of this contest—as its reaction—is the appearance of the mighty power of the Vaisya, before whose angry glance the crowned heads, the lords of heroes, tremble like an aspen leaf on their thrones—whom the poor as well as the prince humbly follow in vain expectation of the golden jar in his hands, that like Tantalus fruit always recedes from the grasp.

The Brahman said : "Learning is the power of all powers that learning is dependent upon me. I possess that learning, so the society must follow my bidding." For some days such was the case. The Kshatriya said : "But for the power of my sword, where would you be. O Brahman, with all your power of lore ? You would in no time be wiped off the face of the earth It is I alone that am the superior." Out flew the flaming sword from the jingling scabbard—society humbly recognised it with bended head. Even the worshipper of learning was the first to turn into the worshipper of the king. The Vaisya is saying · "You, madmen ! what you call the effulgent all-pervading deity is here, in my hand, the ever-shining Gold, the Almighty Sovereign. Behold, through its grace, I am also equally all-powerful O Brahmana ! even now, I shall buy through its grace all your wisdom; learning, prayers and meditation. And, O great king ! your sword, arms, valour and prowess will soon be employed, through the grace of this, my Gold in carrying out my desired objects. Do you see those lofty and extensive mills ? Those are my hives. See, how swarms of millions of bees, the Sudras, are incessantly gathering honey for those hives. Do you know for whom ? For me, this me, who in due course of time will squeeze out every drop of it for my own use and profit."

As during the supremacy of the Brahman and the Kshatriya, there is a centralisation of learning and advancement of civilisation, so the result of the supremacy of the Vaisya is accumulation of wealth. The power of the Vaisya lies in the possession of that coin, the charm of whose clinking sound works with an irresistible fascination on the minds of the four castes. The Vaisya is always in fear lest the Brahman swindles him out of this, his only possession and lest the Kshatriya usurps it by virtue of his superior strength of arms. For self-preservation, the Vaisyas, as a body, are, therefore, of one mind. The Vaisya commands the money; the exorbitant interest that he can exact for its use by others, as

with a lash in his hand, is his powerful weapon which strikes terror in the heart of all. By the power of his money, he is always busy curbing the royal power. That the royal power may not anyhow stand in the way of the inflow of his riches, the merchant is ever watchful. But, for all that he has never the least wish that the power should pass on from the kingly to the Sudra class.

To what country does not the merchant go ? Though himself ignorant, he in carrying on his trade, transplants the learning, wisdom, art and science of one country to another. The wisdom, civilisation and arts that accumulated in the heart of the social body, during the Brahman and the Kshatriya supremacies, are being diffused in all directions by the arteries of commerce to the different market-places of the Vaisya. But for the rising of this Vaisya power, who would have carried today the culture, learning acquirements, and articles of food and luxury of one end of the world to the other ?

And where are they through whose physical labour only are possible the influence of the Brahman, the prowess of the Kshatriya and the fortune of the Vaisya ? What is their history, who, being the real body of society, are designated, at all times, in all countries as "base-born ?" For whom kind India prescribed the mild punishments. "Cut out his tongue, chop off his flesh," and others of like nature, for such a grave offence as any attempt on their part to gain a share of the knowledge and wisdom monopolised by her higher classes—those "moving corpses" of India, and the "beasts of burden" of other countries—the Sudras, what is their lot in life ? What shall I say of India ? Let alone her Sudra class, her Brahmans, to whom belonged the acquisition of scriptural knowledge, are now the foreign professors, her Kshatriyas the ruling Englishman, and Vaisyas too, the English, in whose bone and marrow is the instinct of trade, so that, only the Sudraness—the-beast-of-burdenness—is now left with the Indians themselves.

A cloud of impenetrable darkness has at present equally enveloped us all. Now there is neither firmness of purpose nor boldness of enterprise, neither courage of heart, nor strength of mind, neither aversion to maltreatments by others, nor dislike for slavery, neither love in the heart, nor hope, nor manliness; but what we have in India are only deep-rooted envy and strong antipathy against one another, morbid desire to ruin by hook or by crook the weak, and dog-like to lick the feet of the strong.

Now the highest satisfaction consists in the display of wealth and power, devotion in self-gratification, wisdom in the accumulation of transitory objects; Yoga in hideous diabolical practices, work in the slavery of others; civilisation in base imitation of foreign nations, eloquence in the use of abusive language, the merit of literature in extravagant flatteries of the rich, or in the diffusion of ghastly obscenities ! What to speak separately of the distinct Sudra class of such a land, where the whole population has virtually come down to the level of the Sudra ? The Sudras of countries other than India have become, it seems, a little awake; but they are wanting in proper education, and have only the mutual hatred of men of their own class—a trait common to Sudras. What avails it if they greatly outnumber the other classes ? That unity, by which ten men collect the strength of a million, is yet far away from the Sudra; hence, according to the law of nature, the Sudras invariably form the subject race.

But there is hope In the mighty course of time, the Brahman and the other higher castes too, are being brought down to the lower status of the Sudras, and the Sudras are being raised to higher ranks. Europe, once the land of Sudras, enslaved by Rome, is now filled with Kshatriya valour. Even before our eyes, powerful China, with fast strides, is going down to Sudra-hood, while insignificant Japan rising with the sudden start of a rocket is throwing off her Sudra nature, and is invading by degrees the rights of the higher castes. The attaining of modern Greece and Italy to Kshatriya-hood, and the decline of Turkey, Spain and other countries, also deserve consideration here.

Yet, a time will come when there will be the rising of the Sudra class, *with their Sudra-hood*; that is to say, not like that as at present, when the Sudras are becoming great by acquiring the characteristic qualities of the Vaisya or the Kshatriya, but a time will come, when the Sudras of every country, with their inborn Sudra nature and habits—not becoming in essence Vaisya or Kshatriya, but remaining as Sudras—will gain absolute supremacy in every society. The first glow of the dawn of this new power has already begun to break slowly upon the Western world, and the thoughtful are at their wits' end to reflect upon the final issue of this fresh phenomenon. Socialism, Anarchism, Nihilism[14] and other like sects, are the vanguard of the social revolution that is to follow. As the result of grinding pressure and tyranny,

from time out of mind, the Sudras, as a rule, are either meanly servile, licking dog-like the feet of the higher class, or otherwise are as inhuman as brute beasts. Again, at all times their hopes hopes and aspirations are baffled; hence, of firmness of purpose and perseverance in action they have none.

In spite of the spread of education in the West, there is a great hindrance in the way of the rising of the Sudra class, and that is the recognition of caste as determined by the inherence of more or less good or bad qualities. By this very qualitative caste system which obtained in India in ancient days, the Sudra class was kept down, bound hand and foot. In the first place, scarcely any opportunity was given to the Sudra for the accumulation of wealth, or the earning of proper knowledge and education; to add to this disadvantage, if ever a man of extra-ordinary parts and genius were both of the Sudra class, the influential higher sections of the society forthwith showered titular honours on him and lifted him up to their own circle. His wealth and the power of his wisdom were employed for the benefit of an alien caste—and his own caste-people reaped no benefit of his attainments; and not only so, the good-for-nothing people, the scum and refuse of the higher castes, were cast off and thrown into the Sudra class to swell their number.

Vasistha, Narada, Satyakama Jobala, Vyasa, Kripa, Drona, Karna and others of questionable parentage[15] were raised to the position of a Brahman or a Kshatriya, in virtue of their superior learning or valour; but it remains to be seen how, by these up-liftings, the prostitute, maid-servant, fisherman, or the charioteer[16] class was benefited. Again, on the other hand, the fallen from Brahman, the Kshatriya or the Vaisya class, were always brought down to fill the ranks of the Sudras.

In modern India, no one born of Sudra parents, be he a millionaire or a great Pandit, has ever the right to leave his own society, with the result that the power of his wealth, intellect or wisdom, remaining confined within his own caste limits, is being employed for the betterment of his own comumnity. This hereditary caste system of India, being thus unable to overstep its own bounds, is slowly but surely conducting to the advancement of the people moving within the same circle. The improvement of the lower classes of India will go on, in this way, so long as India will be under a Government dealing with its subjects irrespective of

of their case and position.

Whether the leadership of society be in the hands those who monopolise learning, or wield the powers of riches or arms, the source of its power is always the subject masses. By so much as the class in power severs itself from this source, by so much is it sure to become weak. But such is the strange irony of fate, such is the queer working of Maya, that they from whom this power is directly or indirectly drawn, by fair means or fool—by deceit, stratagem, force, or by voluntary gift—they soon cease to be taken into account by the leading class. When in course of time, the priestly power totally estranged itself from the subject masses, the real dynamo of its power, it was overthrown by the then kingly power taking its stand on the strength of the subject people; again, the kingly power, judging itself to be perfectly independent, created a gaping chasm between itself and the subject people, only to be itself destroyed, or become a mere puppet in the hands of the Vaisyas, who now succeeded in securing a relatively greater co-operation of the mass of the people. The Vaisyas have now gained their end; so they no longer deign to count on help from the subject people, and are trying their best to dissociate themselves from them; consequently, here is being sown the seed of the destruction of this power as well.

Though themselves the reservoir of all powers, the subject masses, creating an eternal distance between one another, have been deprived of all their legitimate rights; and they will remain so as long as this sort of relation continues.

A common danger, or sometimes a common cause of hatred or love, is the bond that binds people together. By the same law that herds beasts of prey together, men also unite into a body and form a caste or a nation of their own. Zealous love for one's own people and country, showing itself in bitter hatred against another—as of Greece against Persia, of Rome against Carthage, of the Arab against the Kaffir, of Spain against the Moor, of France against Spain, of England and Germany against France, and of America against England—is undoubtedly, one of the main causes which lead to the advancement of one nation over another, by way of uniting itself in hostilities against another.

Self-love is the first teacher of self-renunciation—For the preservation of the individual's interest only, one looks first to the well-being of the whole. In the interest of one's own nation is

one's own interest; in the well-being of one's own nation is one's own well-being. Without the co-operation of the many, most works can by no means go on—even self-defence becomes an impossibility. The joining of friendly hands in mutual help for the protection of this self-interest is seen in every nation, and in every land. Of course, the circumference of this self-interest varies with different people. To multiply and to have the opportunity of living a precarious, hand to mouth existence, and over and above this, the condition that the religious pursuits of the higher castes may not suffer in any way, is of the highest gain and interest for Indians ! For modern India, there is no better hope conceivable; this is the last rung of the ladder of India's life !

The present Government of India has certain evils attendant on it, and there are some very great and good parts in it as well. Of highest good is this, that after the fall of the Pataliputra Empire till now, India was never under the guidance of such a powerful machinery of Government as the British, wielding the sceptre throughout the length and breadth of the land. And, under this Vaisya supremacy, thanks to the strenuous enterprise natural to the Vaisya, as the objects of commerce are being brought from one end of the world to another, so at the same time as its natural sequence the ideas and thoughts of different countries are forcing their way into the very bone and marrow of India. Of these ideas and thoughts, some are really most beneficial to her, some are harmful, while others disclose the ignorance and inability of the foreigners to determine what is truly good for the inhabitants of this country.

But, piercing through the mass of whatever good or evil there may be, is seen rising the sure emblem of India's future prosperity —that as the result of the action and reaction between her own old national ideals, on the one hand, and the newly-introduced strange ideals of foreign nations, on the other, she is slowly and gently awakening from her long deep sleep. Mistakes she will make—let her, there is no harm in that; in all our actions, errors and mistakes are our only teachers. Who commits mistakes, the path of truth is attainable by him only. Trees never make mistakes, not do stones fall into error; animals are hardly seen to transgress the fixed laws of nature; but man is prone to err, and it is man who becomes God-on-earth. If our every movement from the nursery to the death-bed, if our every thought from rising at

day-break till retirement at midnight, be prescribed and laid down for us in minutest detail by others—and if the pressure of the king's sword be brought into requisition to keep us within the iron grasp of those prescribed rules—then, what remains for us to think independently for ourselves ? What makes a man genius, a sage ?—isn't it because he thinks, reasons, wills ? Without exercise, the power of deep thinking is lost. Tamas prevails, the mind gets dull and inert, the spirit is brought down to the level of matter. Yet, even now, every religious preacher, every social leader is anxious to frame new laws and regulations for the guidance of society ! Does the country stand in want of rules ? Has it not enough of them ? Under the oppression of rules, the whole nation is verging on its ruin—who stops to understand this ?

In the case of an absolute and arbitrary monarchy, the conquered race is not treated with so much contempt by the ruling power. Under such an absolute government, the rights of all subjects are equal, in other words, no one has any right to question or control the governing authority. So, there remains very little room for special privileges of caste and the like. But, where the monarchy is controlled by the voice of the ruling race, or a republican form of government rules the conquered race, there, a wide distance is created between the ruling and the ruled; and the most part of that power, which, if employed solely for the well-being of the ruled classes, might have done immense good to them within a short time, is wasted by the government in its attempts and applications to keep the subject race under its entire control Under the Roman Emperorship, foreign subjects were, for this very reason, happier than under the Republic of Rome. For this very reason, St. Paul, the Christian Apostle, though born of the conquered Jewish race, obtained permission to appeal to the Roman Emperor, Caesar, to judge of the charges laid against him.[17] Because some individual Englishman may call us "natives" or "niggers," and hate us as uncivilised savages, we do not gain or lose by that We, on account of caste distinctions, have among ourselves far stronger feelings and hatred and scorn against one another, and who can say that the Brahmans, if they get some foolish unenlightened Kshatriya king on their side, will not graciously try again to "cut out the Sudras tongues and chop off their limbs ?" That recently in Eastern Aryavarta, the different caste-people seem to develop a feeling of united sympathy amidst

themselves, with a view to ameliorate their present social condition—that, in the Mahratta country, the Brahmans have begun to sing paeans in praise of the "Maratha" race—these, the lower castes cannot yet believe to be the outcome of pure disinterestedness.

But, gradually, the idea is being formed in the minds of the English public that the passing away of the Indian Empire from their sway will end in imminent peril to the English nation, and be their ruin. So, by any means whatsoever, the supremacy of England must be maintained in India. The way to effect this, they think, is by keeping uppermost in the heart of every Indian the mighty prestige and glory of the British nation. It gives rise to both laughter and tears simultaneously, to observe how this ludicrous and pitiful sentiment is gaining among the English, and how they are steadily extending their *modus operandi* for the carrying out of this sentiment into practice. It seems as if the Englishmen resident in India are forgetting that, so long as that fortitude, that perseverance, and that intense national unity of purpose, by which Englishmen have earned this Indian Empire—and that ever wide-awake commercial genius aided by science, which has turned even India, the mother of all riches, into the principal mart of England—so long as these characteristics are not eliminated from their national life, their throne in India is unshakable. So long as these qualities are inherent in the British character, let thousands of such Indian Empires be lost, thousands will be earned again. But, if the flow of the stream of those qualities be retarded, shall an Empire be governed by the mere emblazoning of British prestige and glory Therefore, when such remarkable traits of character are still predominant in the English as a nation, it is utterly useless to spend so much energy and power for the mere preservation of meaningless "prestige." If that power were employed for the welfare of the subject-people, that would certainly have been a great gain for both the ruling and the ruled races

It has been said before that India is slowly awakening through her friction with the outside nations; and as the result of this little awakening is the appearance, to a certain extent, of free and independent thought in modern India. On one side, is modern Western science, dazzling the eyes with the brilliancy of myriad suns, and driving in the chariot of hard and fast facts

collected by the application of tangible powers direct in their incision; on the other, are the hopeful and strengthening traditions of her ancient forefathers, in the days when she was at the zenith of her glory—traditions that have been brought out of the pages of her history of the great sages by her own land and outside, that run for numberless years and centuries through her every vein with the quickening of life drawn from universal love—traditions that reveal unsurpassed valour, superhuman genius, and supreme spirituality, which are the envy of the gods—these inspire her with future hopes. On one side, rank materialism, plenitude of fortune accumulation of gigantic power, and intense sense-pursuits have, through foreign literature, caused a tremendous stir; on the other, through the confounding din of all these discordant sounds, she hears, in low yet unmistakable accents, the heart-rending cries of her ancient gods, cutting her to the quick. There lie before her various strange luxuries introduced from the West—celestial drinks, costly well-served food, splendid apparel, magnificent palaces, new modes of conveyance, new manners, new fashions dressed in which moves about the well-educated girl in shameless freedom—all these are arousing unfelt desires. Again, the scene changes and in its place appear, with stern presence, Sita, Savitri, austere religious vows, fastings, the forest retreat, the matted locks and orange garb of the semi-naked Sannyasin, Samadhi and the search after the Self. On one side, is the independence of Western societies based on self-interest; on the other, is the extreme self-sacrifice of the Aryan society. In this violent conflict, is it strange that Indian society should be tossed up and down ? Of the West the goal is individual independence, the language, money-making education, the means, politics; of India, the goal is Mukti, the language, the Veda, the means, renunciation. For a time, Modern India thinks, as it were, I am ruining this worldly life of mine in vain expectation of uncertain spiritual welfare hereafter, which has spread its fascination over me; and again, lo ! spell-bound she listens,—"Here, in this world of death and change. O man, where is thy happiness ?"

On one side, New India is saying, "We should have full freedom in the selection of husband and wife; because the marriage in which are involved the happiness and misery of all our future life, we must have the right to determine, according to our own free will." On the other. Old India is dictating. "Marriage

is not for sense enjoyment, but to prepetuate the race. This is the Indian conception of marriage. By the producing of children, you are contributing to, and are responsible for, the future good or evil of the society Hence, society has the right to dictate whom you shall marry and whom you shall not. That form of marriage obtains in society, which is conducive most to its well-being; do you give up your desire of individual pleasure for the good of the many."

On one side, New India is saying, "If we only adopt Western ideas, Western language, Western food, Western dress and Western manners, we shall be as strong and powerful as the Western nation"; on the other, Old India is saying, "Fools ! By imitation, other's ideas never become one's own—nothing, unless earned, is your own Does the ass in the lion's skin become the lion ?"

On one side, New India is saying, "What the Western nations do is surely good, otherwise how did they become so great ?" On the other side, Old India is saying, "The flash of lightning is intensely bright, but only for a moment; look out, boys, it is dazzling your eyes. Beware !"

Have we not then to learn anything from the West ? Must we not needs try and exert ourselves for better things ? Are we perfect ? Is our society entirely spotless, without any flaw ?—There are many things to learn, we must struggle for new and higher things still we die—struggle is the end of human life. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "As long as I live, so long I learn." That man or that society which has nothing to learn, is already in the jaws of death. Yes, learn we must many things from the West—but there are fears as well.

A certain young man of little understanding used always to blame the Hindu Shastras before Sri Ramakrishna. One day he praised the Bhagavad-Gita, on which Sri Ramakrishna said, "Methinks, some European Pandit has praised the Gita, and so he has also followed suit."

O India, this is your terrible danger. The spell of imitating the West is getting such a strong hold upon you that what is good or what is bad is no longer decided by reason, judgment, discrimination, or reference to the Shastras. Whatever ideas, whatever manners the white men praise or like, are good; whatever things they dislike or censure, are bad ? Alas what can be a

more tangible proof of foolishness than this ?

The Western ladies move freely everywhere, therefore, that is good; they choose for themselves their husbands, therefore, that is the highest step of advancement; the Westerners disapprove of our dress, decorations, food and ways of living, therefore, they must be very bad, the Westerners condemn image-worship as sinful, surely then, image-worship is the greatest sin, there is no doubt of it ?

The Westerners say that worshipping a single Deity is fruitful of the highest spiritual goods therefore, let us throw our gods and goddesses into the river Ganges ! The Westerners hold caste distinctions to be obnoxious, therefore, let all the different castes be jumbled into one ! The Westerners say that child-marriage is the root of all evils, therefore, that is also very bad, of a certainly it is !

We are not discussing here whether these customs deserve countenance or rejection; but if the mere disapproval of the Westerners be the measure of the abominableness of our manners and customs, then, it is our duty to raise our emphatic protest against it.

The present writer has, to some extent, personal experience of Western society. His conviction resulting from such experience has been that there is such a wide divergence between the Western society and the Indian as regards the primal course and goal of each, that any sect in India, framed after the Western model, will miss the aim. We have not the least sympathy with those who, never having lived in Western society and, therefore, utterly ignorant of the rules and prohibitions regarding the association of men and women that obtain there, and which act as safeguards to preserve the purity of the Western women, allow a free rein to the unrestricted intermingling of men and women in our society.

I observed in the West also that the children of weaker nations, if born in England, give themselves out as Englishmen, instead of Greek, Portuguese, Spaniard, etc., as the case may be. All drift towards the strong. That the light of glory which shines in the glorious may anyhow fall and reflect on one's own body, i.e., to shine in the borrowed light of the great, is the one desire of the weak When I see Indians dressed in European apparel and costumes, the thought comes to my mind, perhaps, they feel

ashamed to own their nationality and kinship with the ignorant, poor, illiterate, down-trodden people of India! Nourished by the blood of the Hindu for the last fourteen centuries, the Parsee is no longer a "native!" Before the arrogance of the casteless, who pretend to be and glorify themselves in being Brahmans, the true nobility of the old, heroic, high-class Brahman melts into nothingness! Again, the Westerners have now taught us that those stupid, ignorant low-caste millions of India, clad only in loin cloths, are non-Aryans. They are therefore no more our kith and kin!

India! With this mere echoing of others, with this base imitation of others, with this dependence on others, this slavish weakness, this vile detestable cruelty—wouldst thou, with these provisions only, scale the highest pinnacle of civilisation and greatness? Wouldst thou attain, by means of thy disgraceful cowardice, that freedom deserved only by the brave and the heroic? O India! Forget not that the ideal of thy womanhood is Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, forget not that the God thou worshippest is the great Ascetic of ascetics, the all-renouncing Sankara, the Lord of Uma; forget not that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for sense-pleasure, are not for thy individual personal happiness; forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the *Mother's* altar; forget not that thy social order is but the reflex of the Infinite Universal Motherhood; forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art in Indian, and proudly proclaim. "I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother." Say, "The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahman Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my brother." Thou too clad with but a rag round thy loins proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice. "The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life, India's gods and goddesses are my God, India's society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Varanasi of my old age." Say, brother, "The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good," and repeat and pray day and night, "O Thou Lord of Gauri, O Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me! O Thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and—Make me a Man!"

Notes and References

1 Vedic hymns uttered by the priests to invoke the Devas at the time of Sacrifice.
2. The men who perform Sacrifices.
3 The name of the Soma plant as commonly found in the Vedas The priests offered to the Devas the juice of this plant at the time of Sacrifice.
4 The name given to the great king, Asoka, after he embraced Buddhism.
5. The performer of the great snake-sacrifice of Mahabharata.
6. Agnivarna was a Prince of the Solar race, who never used to come out of the seraglio, and died of consumption due to excessive indulgence
7. The great king Asoka was at first called Chandasoka, i.e , Fierce Asoka, because of his ascending the throne by killing his brother and his other cruel deeds After nine years of reign he became a convert to Buddhism and his character underwent a complete transformation, he was thenceforth known for his good deeds by the name of Dharmasoka, the beloved of the gods
8. Literally, "government by five," in which the village-men sit together and decide, among themselves, all disputes
9 The Persian governors of Aryavarta and Guzrat
10 Stambhana Uchchatana, Vasikarana and Marana, are respectively, suppression of any of the bodily faculties causing a person's ruin, subduing and getting mastery over any one and killing another by means of magical incantations
11. The sacred tuft or lock of hair left on the crown of the head at tonsure.
12. Taken from one of the well-known didactic verses of the statesman-Pandit Chanakya, which runs thus :—"Let the father treat with tenderness the child till he is five, let him (the father) reporve him (the child) for the next ten years; when the son attains the age of sixteen, the father ought to deal with him as his friend.
13 His story occurs in the Bhagavatam The King Vena thought himself higher than Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara, and declared accordingly that all worship should be offered to him. The Rishis once sought him and tried by good advice to make him give up such egoism, but he in return insulted them and ordered them to worship him, whereupon, it is said, he was distroyed by the fire of the anger of the Rishis
14. Socialism took its birth in 1835 A D The initiator of Anarchism was Bakunin, who was born in 1815 A D Nihilism was first inaugurated in Russia in 1882
15 (1) Vasistha's father was Brahma and mother unknown (2) Narada's mother was maid-servant and father unkown (3) Satyakama Jabala's mother was a maid-servant, by name Jabala, and father unknown (4) Vyasa's father was a Brahman sage, Parasara, and mother, Matsyagandha, the virgin daugher of a fisherman (5) Kripa's father was a Brahman. sage, Saradvan Gautama, and mother, the goddess Janapadi. (6) Drona's father was the Brahman sage, Bharadwaj, and mother, the goddess Ghritachi, (7) Karna's mother was Kunti, who conceived during

her maidenhood, and father, the god Sun. For detailed information, *vide* the accounts of their births, for (1), See Chapter 174, Adiparva, Mahabharata, or in Rigveda, 7, 33, 11-18, for (2), Chapter 6, Skandha 1, Shrimat Bhagavatam, for (3) section 4, Prapathaka, iv, Chhandogya Upanishad, for (4), (5), (6) and (7), Chapters, 105, 130, 130 and 111, respectively of the Adiparva of the Mahabharata

16 In her anxiety to save her reputation, Kunti threw the newborn child, Karna, into water A charioteer found the child in this pitiable condition and took him home Henceforth, the child was kept under the charioteer' parental care

17. The Acts, XXV, 11

3

THE EDUCATION THAT INDIA NEEDS

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

In reply to your question about the method of work the most important thing I have to say is that the work should be started on a scale which would be commensurate with the results desired. I have heard much of your liberal mind, patriotism and steady perseverance from my friend Miss Muller, and the proof of your erudition is evident I look upon it as great good fortune that you are desirous to know what little this insignificant life has been able to attempt, I shall state it to you here, as far as I can But first I shall lay before you my mature convictions for your deliberation.

We have been slaves for ever, i e , it has never been given to the masses of India to express the inner light which is their inheritance The Occident has been rapidly advancing towards freedom for the last few centuries In India, it was the king who used to prescribe everything, from Kulinism down to what one should eat and what one should not In Western countries, the people do everything themselves

The king now has nothing to say in any social matter on the other hand, the Indian people have not yet even the least faith in themselves, what to say of self-reliance The faith in one's own self, which is the basis of Vedanta, has not yet been even slightly carried into practice It is for this reason that the Western method—i e , first of all, discussion about the wished for end, then the carrying it out by the combination of all the forces—is of no avail even now in this country, it is for this reason that we appear

so greatly conservative under foreign rule. If this be true, then it is a vain attempt to do any great work by means of public discussion. "There is no chance of a headache where there is no head"—where is the public ? Besides, we are so devoid of strength that our whole energy is exhausted if we undertake to discuss anything; none is left for work. It is for this reason, I suppose, we observe in Bengal almost always—"Much cry but little wool." Secondly, as I have written before, I do not expect anything from the rich people of India It is best to work among the youth in whom lies our hope—patiently, steadily and without noise.

Now about work. From the day when education and culture, etc., began to spread gradually from patricians to plebeians, grew the distinction between the modern civilisation as of Western countries, and the ancient civilisation as of India, Egypt, Rome, etc. I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it in the same way, i e., by spreading education among the masses. A great fuss has been made for half a century about social reform Travelling through various places of India these last ten years, I observed the country full of social reform associations. But I did not find one association for them by sucking whose blood the people known as "gentlemen" have become and continue to be gentlemen ! How many sepoys were brought by the Mussalmans ? How many Englishmen are there ? Where, except in India, can be had millions of men who will cut the throats of their own fathers and brothers for six rupees ? Sixty millions of Mussalmans in seven hundred years of Mohammedan rule, and two millions of Christians in one hundred years of Christian rule—what makes it so ? Why has originality entirely forsaken the country ? Why are our deft-fingered artisans daily becoming exinct, unable to compete with the Europeans ? By what power again has the German labourer succeeded in shaking the many-century-grounded firm footing of the English labourer ?

Education, education, education alone ! Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people and I used to shed tears. What

made the difference ? Education was the answer I got. Through education, faith in one's own self, and through faith in one's own self the inherent Brahman is awaking up in them, while the Brahman in us is gradually becoming dormant. In New York I used to observe the Irish colonists come—down-trodden, haggard-looking, destitute of all possessions at home, penniless and wooden-headed—with their only belongings, a stick and a bundle of rags hanging at the end of it, fright in their steps, alarm in their steps, alarm in their eyes. A different spectacle in six months the man walks upright, his attire is changed. In his eyes and steps there is no more sign of frights. What is the cause ? Our Vedanta says that the Irishman was kept surrounded by contempt in his own country—the whole of nature was telling him with one voice, "Pat, you have no more hope, you are born a slave and will remain so." Having been thus told from his birth, Pat believed in it and hypnotised himself that he was very low, and the Brahman in him shrank away. While no sooner had he landed in America than he heard the shout going up on all sides, "Pat, you are a man as we are, it is man who has done all, a man like you and me can do everything : have courage !" Pat raised his head and saw that it was so, the Brahman within woke up, Nature herself spoke, as it were, "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached" (*Katha Upanishad, I iii. 4*).

Likewise the education that our boys receive is very negative. The school-boys learns nothing, but has everything of his own broken down—want of Shraddha is the result. The Shraddha which is the key-note of the Veda and the Vedanta—the Shraddha which emboldened Nichiketa to face Yama and question him, through which Shraddha this world moves—the annihilation of that Shraddha ! "The ignorant, the man devoid of Shraddha, the doubting self runs to ruin." Therefore are we so near destruction. The remedy now is the spread of education. First of all, Self-knowledge. I do not mean thereby, matted hair, staff, Kamandalu and mountain caves which the word suggests. What do I mean then ? Cannot the knowledge by which is attained even freedom from the bondage of worldly existence, bring ordinary material prosperity ? Certainly it can. Freedom, dispassion, renunciation, all these are the very highest ideals, "Even a little of this Dharma saves from the great fear (of birth and death)." Daulist, qualified-Monist, Monist, Shaiva, Vaishnava, Shakta, even the

Buddhist and the Jain and others—whatever sects have arisen in India—are all at one in this respect, that infinite power is latent in this Jivatman (individualised soul), from the ant to the perfect man there is the same Atman in all, the difference being only in manifestation. "As a farmer breaks the obstacles (to the course of water)" (Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, Kaivalyapada 3). That power manifests as soon as it gets the opportunity and the right place and time. From the highest god to the meanest grass, the same power is present in all—whether manifested or not. We shall have to call forth that power by going from door to door.

Secondly, along with this, education has to be imparted. That is easy to say, but how to reduce in into practice? There are thousands of unselfish, kind-hearted men in our country, who have renounced everything. In the same way as they travel about and give religious instructions without any remuneration, so at least half of them can be trained as teachers, or bearers of such education as we need most. For that, we want first of all a centre in the capital of each Presidency, from whence to spread slowly thoughout the whole of India. Two centres have recently been started in Madras and Calcutta, there is hope of more soon. Then, the greater part of the education to the poor should be given orally, time is not yet ripe for schools Gradually in these main centres will be taught agriculture, industry, etc., and workshops will be established for the furtherance of arts. To sell the manufactures of those workshops in Europe and America, associations will be started like those already in existence. It will be necessary to start centres for women, exactly like those for men. But you are aware how difficult that is in this country. Again, "The snake which bites, must take out its own poison"—and that this is going to be, is my firm conviction; the money required for these works would have to come from the West. And for that reason, our religion should be preached in Europe and America. Modern science has undermined the basis of religions like Christianity. Over and above that, luxury is about to kill the religious instinct itself. Europe and America are now looking towards India with expectant eyes—this is the time for philanthropy, this is the time to occupy the hostile strongholds.

In the West, women rule; all influence and power are theirs. If bold and talented women like yourself, versed in Vedanta, go to England to preach, I am sure that every year hundreds of men and

women will become blessed by adopting the religion of the land of Bharata. The only woman who went over from our country was Ramabai; her knowledge of English, Western science and art was limited; still she surprised all If any one like you goes, England will be stirred, what to speak of America ! If an Indian woman in Indian dress preach there the religion which fell from the lips of the Rishis of India—I see a prophetic vision—there will rise a great wave which will inundate the whole Western world. Will there be no woman in the land of Maitreyi, Khana, Lilavati, Savitri and Ubhayabharati, who will venture to do this ? The Lord knows, England we shall conquer, England we shall possess, through the power of spirituality. "There is no other way of salvation." Can salvation ever come by getting up meetings and societies ? Our conquerous must be made Devas by the power of our spirituality. I am a humble mendicant, an itinerant monk; I am helpless and alone. What can I do ? You have the power of wealth, intellect and education; will you forego this opportunity ? Conquest of England, Europe and America—this should be our one supreme Mantra at present, in it lies the well-being of the country. Expansion is the sign of life, and we must spread over the world with our spiritual ideals. Alas ! this frame is poor, moreover, the physique of a Bengali, even under this labour a fatal disease has attacked it; but there is the hope—

> "A kindred spirit is or will be born out of the limitless time and populous earth to accomplish the work."

About vegetarian diet I have to say this—first, my Master was a vegetarian, but if he was given meat offered to the Goddess, he used to hold it up to his head. The taking of life is undoubtedly sinful, but so long as vegetable food is not made suitable to the human system, through progress in chemistry, there is no other alternative but meat-eating. So long as man shall have to live a Rajasika (active) life under circumstances like the present, there is no other way except through meat-eating. It is true that the Emperor Asoka saved the lives of millions of animals by the threat of the sword, but, is not the slavery of a thousand years more dreadful than that ? Taking the life of a few goats as against the inability to protect the honour of one's own wife and daughter, and to save the morsels for one's children from robbing hands—

which of these is more sinful ? Rather let those belonging to the upper ten, who do not earn their livelihood by manual labour, not take meat, but the forcing of vegetarianism upon those who have to earn their bread by labouring day and night, is one of the causes of the loss of our national freedom, Japan is an example of what good and nourishing food can do

May the All-powerful Vishveshwari inspire your heart !

4

OUR PRESENT SOCIAL PROBLEMS

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

"The Lord whose nature is unspeakable love" That this characteristic of God mentioned by Narada is manifested and admitted on all hands is the firm conviction of my life. The aggregate of many individuals is called Samashti (the whole), and each individual is called Vyashti (a part) You and I—each is Vyashti, society is Samashti You, I, an animal, a bird, a worm, an insect, a tree, a creeper, the earth, a planet, a star—each is Vyashti, while the universe is Samashti, which is called Virat, Hirnyagarbha or Ishvara in Vedanta, and Brahma, Vishnu, Devi, etc, in the Puranas Whether or not Vyashti has individual freedom, and if it has, what should be its measure, whether or not Vyashti should completely sacrifice its own will, its own happiness for Samashti—are the perennial problems before every society Society everywhere is busy finding the solution of these problems These, like big waves, are agitating modern Western society The doctrine which demands the sacrifice individual freedom to social supremacy is called socialism, while that which advocates the cause of the individual is called individualism

Our motherland is a glowing example of the results and consequence of the eternal subjection of the individual to society and forced self-sacrifice by dint of institution and discipline. In this country men are born according to Shastric injunctions, they eat and drink by prescribed rules throughout life, they go through marriage and kindred functions in the same way; in short, they

even die according to Shastric injunctions. The hard discipline, with the exception of one great good point, is fraught with evil. The good point is that men can do one or two things well, with every day through generations. The delicious rice and curry which a cook of this country prepares with the aid of three lumps of earth and a few sticks can be had nowhere else. With the simple mechanism an antediluvian loom, worth one rupee, and the feet put in a pit, it is possible to make kincobs worth twenty rupees a yard, in the country alone. A torn mat, an earthen lamp, and that fed by castor oil—with the aid of materials such as these, wonderful *savants* are produced in this country alone. An all-forbearing attachment to an ugly and deformed wife, a lifelong devotion to a worthless and villainous husband, are possible in this country alone. Thus far the bright side.

But all these things are done by people guided like lifeless machines. There is no mental activity, no unfoldment of the heart, no vibration of life, no flux of hope; there is no strong stimulation of the will, no experience of keen pleasure, nor the contact of intense sorrow; there is no stir of inventive genius, no desire for novelty, no appreciation of new things. Clouds never pass away from the mind, the radiant picture of the morning sun never charms this heart. It never even occurs to this mind if there is any better state than this; where it does, it cannot convince; in the event of conviction, effort is lacking; and even where there is effort, lack of enthusiasm kills it out.

If living by rule alone ensures excellence, if it be virtue to follow strictly, the rules and customs handed down through generations, say then, who is more virtuous than a tree, who is a greater devotee, a holier saint, than a railway train ? Who has ever seen a piece of stone transgress a natural law ? Who has ever known cattle to commit sin ?

The huge steamer, the mighty railway engine—they are non-intelligent, they move, turn and run, but they are without intelligence. And yonder tiny worm which moved away from the railway line to save its life, why is it intelligent ? There is no manifestation of will in the machine, the machine never wishes to transgress law; the worm wants to oppose law, rises against law whether it succeeds or not, therefore, it is intelligent. Greater is the happiness, higher is the Jiva, in population as this will is more successfully manifest. The will of God is perfectly fruitful,

therefore, He is the highest.

What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education. Now consider, is that education, as a result of which the will being continuously choked by force through generations is now well-nigh killed out? Under whose sway—why mention new ideas, even the old ones are disappearing one by one—is that education which is slowly making man a machine? It is more blessed, in my opinion, even to go wrong impelled by one's free will and intelligence then to be good as an automation. Again, can that be called society which is formed by an aggregate of men who are like lumps of clay, like lifeless machines, like heaped up pebbles? How can such society fare well? Were good possible, then instead of being slaves for hundreds of years, we would have been the greatest nation on earth, and this soil of India, instead of being a mine of stupidity would have the eternal fountain-head of learning.

Is not self-sacrifice, then, a virtue? Is not the most virtuous deed to sacrifice the happiness of one, the welfare of one, for the sake of the many? Exactly, but as the Bengali adage goes, "Can beauty be manufactured by rubbing and scrubbing? Can love be generated by effort and compulsion?" What glory is there in the renunciation of an eternal beggar? What virtue is there in the sense-control of one devoid of sense-power? What again is the self-sacrifice of one devoid of idea, devoid of heart, devoid of high ambition and devoid of the conception of what constitutes society? What expression of devotedness to a husband is there by forcing a widow to commit Sati? Why make people do virtuous deeds by teaching superstitions? I say, liberate, undo the shackles of people as much as you can. Can dirt be washed by dirt? Can bondage be removed by bondage? Where is the instance? When you would be able to sacrifice all desire for happiness for the sake of society, then you would be the Buddha, then you would be free, that is far off. Again, do you think the way to it lies through oppression? "Oh, what examples of self-denial are our widows! Oh, how sweet is child-marriage! Is another such custom possible! Can there be anything but love between husband and wife in such a marriage!"—such is the whine going round nowadays. But as to the men, the masters of

the situation, there is no need of self-denial for them ! Is there a virtue higher than serving others ? But the same does not supply to Brahmans—you others do it ! The truth is that in this country parents and relatives can ruthlessly sacrifice the best interests of their children and others for their own selfish ends, to save themselves by a compromise to society, and the teaching of generations rendering the mind callous, has made it perfectly easy. He, the brave alone, can deny self. The coward, afraid of the lash, with one hand wipes his eyes and gives with the other. Of what avail are such gifts ? It is a far cry to love universal. The young plant should be hedged in and taken care of. One can hope gradually to attain to universal love, if one can learn to love one object unselfishly. If devotion to one particular Ishtadeva is attained, devotion to the universal Virat is gradually possible.

Therefore, when one has been able to deny self for an individual, one should talk of self-sacrifice for the sake of society, not before. It is action with desire that leads to action without desire. Is the renunciation of desire possible, if desire did not exist in the beginning ? And what could it mean ? Can light have any meaning if there is no darkness ?

Worship with desire with attachment, comes first. Commence with the worship of the little, then the greater will come of itself

Mother, be not anxious. It is against the big tree that the great wind strikes. "Poking a fire makes it burn better" ! "A snake struck on the head raises its hood", and so on. When there comes affliction in the heart, when the storm of sorrow blows all around, and it seems light will be seen no more, when hope and courage are almost gone, it is then, in the midst of this great spiritual tempest, that the light of Brahman within gleams. Brought up in the lap of luxury, lying on a bed of roses and never shedding a tear, who has ever become great, who has ever unfolded the Brahman within ? Why do you fear to weep ? Weep Weeping clears the eyes and brings about intuition. Then the vision of diversity—man, animal, tree--slowly melting away, makes room for the infinite realisation of Brahman everywhere and in everything. Then.—

> "Verily, seeing the same God equally existent everywhere, he does not injure the Self by the Self, and so goes to the Supreme Goal."

5

THE PROBLEM OF MODERN INDIA AND ITS SOLUTION*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The ancient history of India is full of descriptions of the gigantic energies and their multifarious workings, the boundless spirit, the combination of indomitable action and reaction of the various forces, and, above all, the profound thoughtfulness of a godly race If the world history is understood to mean merely narratives of kings and emperors, and pictures of society—tyrannised over from time to time by the evil passions, haughtiness, avarice, etc , of the rulers of the time, portraying the acts resulting from their good or evil propensities, and how these reacted upon the society of that time—such a history India perhaps does not possess But every line of that mass of the religious literature of India, her ocean of poetry, her philosophies and various scientific works reveal to us—a thousand times more clearly than the narratives of the life-incidents and genealogies of particular kings and emperors can ever do—the exact position and every step made in advance by that vast body of men who, even from before the dawn of civilisation, impelled by hunger and thirst, lust and greed, etc , attracted by the charm of beauty, endowed with a great and indomitable mental power, and moved by various sentiments, arrived through various ways and means at

*Introduction to the *Udbodhana*, when it was started on the 14th of January, 1899

that stage of eminence. Although the heaps of those triumphal flags which they gathered in their innumerable victories over nature with which they had been waging war for ages, have, of late, been torn and tattered by the violent winds of adverse circumstances, and become worn out through age, yet, they still proclaim the glory of Ancient India.

Whether this race slowly proceeded from Central Asia, Northern Europe, or the Arctic regions, and gradually came down and sanctified India by settling there at last, or whether the holy land of India was their original native place, we have no proper means of knowing now. Or whether a vast race living in or outside India, being displaced from its original abode, in conformity with natural laws, came in the course of time to colonise and settle over Europe and other places—and whether these people were white or black, blue-eyed or dark-eyed, galden-haired or black-haired—all these matters—there is no sufficient ground to prove now, with the one exception of the fact of the kinship of Sanskrit with a few European languages. Similarly, it is not easy to arrive at a final conclusion as to the modern Indians, whether they all are the pure descendants of that race, or how much of the blood of that race is flowing in their veins, or again, what races amongst them have any of that even in them.

However, we do not, in fact, lose much by this uncertainty.

But there is one fact to remember. Of that ancient Indian race, upon which the rays of civilisation first dawned, where deep thoughtfulness first revealed itself, in full glory, there are still found hundreds of thousands of its children, born of its mind—the inheritors of its thoughts and sentiments—ready to claim them.

Crossing over mountains, rivers and oceans, setting at naught, as it were, the obstacles of the distance of space and time, the blood of Indian thought has flowed, and is still flowing into the veins of other nations of the globe, whether in a distinct, or in some unknown way. Perhaps to us belongs the major portion of that universal ancient inheritance.

In a small country lying in the eastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea, beautified and adorned by nature, and garlanded by well-formed and beautiful-looking islands, lived a race of men who were few in number, but of a very charming aspect, perfectly formed, and strong in muscles and sinews, light of body, yet possessing steadiness and perseverence, and who were

unrivalled for the creation of all earthly beauties, as well as endowed with extraordinary practicality and intellect. The other ancient nations used to call them Yavanas, but they called themselves Greeks. This handful of a vigorous and wonderful race is a unique example in the annals of man. Wherever and in whatever nation, there has been, or is, any advance made in earthly science, up to the present day—such as, social, martial, political, sculptural, etc.,—there the shadow of ancient Greece has fallen. Let us leave apart the consideration of ancient times, for, even in this modern age, we, the Bengalees, think ourselves proud and enlightened simply by following the footmarks of these Yavana Gurus for these last fifty years, illumining our homes with what light of theirs is reaching us through the European literature.

The whole of Europe nowadays is in every respect, the disciple of ancient Greece, and her proper inheritor; so much so, that a wise man of England has said, "Whatever nature has not created, that is the creation of the Greek mind."

These two gigantic rivers (Aryans and Yavanas) issuing from far-away and different mountains (India and Greece), occasionally come in contact with each other, and whenever such confluence takes place, a tremendous intellectual or spiritual tide, rising in human scocieties, greatly expands the range of civilisation and confirms the bond of univeral brotherhood among men.

Once in far remote antiquity, the Indian philosophy coming in contact with Greek energy, led to the rise of the Persian, the Roman and other great nations. After the invasion of Alexander the Great, these two great waterfalls colliding with each other, deluged nearly half of the globe with spiritual tides, such as, Christianity, etc. Again, a similar commingling, resulting in the improvement and prosperity of Arabia, laid the foundation of modern Earopean civilisation. And perhaps, in our own day, such a time for the conjunction of these two gigantic forces has presented itself again. This time their centre is India.

The air of India pre-eminently conduces to quietness, the nature of the Yavana is the constant expression of power; profound meditation characterises the one, the indomitable spirit of dexterous activity, the other : one's motto is "renunciation," the other's "enjoyment." One's whole energy is directed inwards, the other's, outwards : one's whole learning consists in the knowledge of the Self, or the Subject, the other's, in the knowlege

of the not-Self, or the object (perishable creation); one loves Moksha (spiritual freedom), the other loves political independence; one is unmindful of gaining prosperity in this world, the other sets his whole heart on making a heaven of this world; one, aspiring after eternal bliss, is indifferent to all the ephemeral pleasures of this life, and the other, doubting the existence of eternal bliss, or knowing it to be far away, directs his whole energy to the attainment of earthly pleasures as much as possible.

In this age, both these types of mankind are extinct, only their physical and mental children, their works and thoughts are existing.

Europe and America are the advanced children of the Yavanas, a glory to their forefathers; but the modern inhabitants of the land of Bharata are not the glory of the ancient Aryans. But, as fire remains intact under cover of ashes, so the ancestral fire still remains latent in these modern Indians. Through the grace of the Almighty Power, it is sure to manifest itself in time.

What will accrue when that ancestral fire manifests itself?

Would the sky of India again appear clouded over by waving masses of smoke springing from the Vedic sacrificial fire? Or is the glory of Rantideva again going to be revived in the blood of the sacrificed animals? Are the old customs of Gomedha, Ashvamedha, or perpetuating the lineage from a husband's brother, and other usages of a like nature, to come back again? Or is the deluge of a Buddhistic propaganda again going to turn the whole of India into a big monastery? Are the laws of Manu going to be rehabilitated as of yore? Or is the discrimination of food prescribed and forbidden, varying in accordance with geographical dimensions, as it is at the present day, alone going to have its all-powerful domination over the length and breadth of the country? Is the caste system to remain, and is it going to depend eternally upon the birthright of a man, or is it going to be determined by his qualification? And again in that caste system, is the discrimination of food, its touchableness or untouchableness, dependent upon the purity or the inpurity of the man who touches it, to be observed as it is in Bengal, or will it assume a form more strict as it does in Madras? Or, as in the Punjab, will all such restrictions be obliterated? Are the marriages of the different Varnas to take place from the upper to the lower Varna in the successive order, as in Manu's days, and as it is

still in vogue in Nepal ? Or, as in Bengal and other places, are they to be kept restricted to a very limited number of individuals constituting one of the several communities of a certain class of the Varna ? To give a conclusive answer to all these questions is extremely difficult. They become the more difficult of solution, considering the difference in the customs prevailing in different parts of the country—nay, as we find even in the same part of the country such a wide divergence of customs among different castes and families.

Then what is to be ?

What we should have is what we have not, perhaps what our forefathers even had not—that which the Yavanas had; that, impelled, by the life-vibration of which, is issuing forth in rapid succession from the great dynamo of Europe, the electric flow of that tremendous power, vivifying the whole world. We want that. We want that energy, that love of independence, that spirit of self-reliance, that immovable fortitude, that dexterity in action, that bond of unity of purpose, that thirst or improvement. Checking a little the constant looking back to the past, we want that expansive vision infinitely projected forward; and we want—that intense spirit of activity (Rajas) which will flow through our every vein, from head to foot.

What can be a greater giver of peace than renunciation ? A little ephemeral worldly good is nothing in comparison with eternal good; no doubt of that. What can bring greater strength than Sattva Guna (absolute purity of mind) ? It is indeed true that all other kinds of knowledge are but non-knowlede in comparison with Self-knowledge, but I ask—how many are there in the world fortunate enough to gain that Sattva Guna ? How many in this land of Bharata ? How many have that noble heroism which can renounce all, shaking off the idea of "I and mine ?" How many are blessed enough to possess that far-sight of wisdom which makes the earthly pleasures appear to be but vanity of vanities ? Where is that broadhearted man who is apt to forget even his own body in meditating over the beauty and glory of the Divine ? Those who are such are but a handful in comparison to the population of the whole of India; and in order that these men may attain to their salvation, will the millions and millions of men and women of India have to be crushed under the wheel of the present-day society and religion ?

And what good can come out of such a crushing ?

Do you not see—taking up this plea of Sattva, the country has been slowly and slowly drowned in the ocean of Tamas, or dark ignorance ? Where the most dull want to hide their stupidity by covering it with a false desire for the Highest Knowledge, which is beyond all activities, either physical or mental; where one, born and bred in life-long laziness, wants to throw the veil of renunciation over his own unfitness for work; where the most diabolical try to make their cruelty appear under the cloak of austerity, as a part of religion; where no one has an eye upon his own incapacity, but everyone is ready to lay the whole blame on others, where knowledge consists only in getting some books by heart, genius consists in chewing the cud of others' thoughts, and the highest glory consists in taking the name of ancestors; do we require any other proof to show that country is being day by day drowned in utter Tamas ?

Therefore, Sattva, or absolute purity, is now far away from us. Those amonst us who are not yet fit, but who hope to be fit, to reach to that absolutely pure Paramahamsa state—for them, the acquirement of Rajas, or intense activity, is what is most beneficial now Unless a man passes through Rajas, can he ever attain to that perfect Sattvika state ? How can one expect Yoga, or union with God, unless one has previously finished with his thirst for Bhoga, or enjoyment ? How can renunciation come where there is no Vairagyam, or dispassion for all the charms of enjoyment ?

On the other hand, the quality of Rajas is apt to die down as soon as it comes up, like a fire of palm leaves. The presence of Sattva and the Nitya, or Eternal Reality, is almost in a state of juxtaposition—Sattva is nearly Nitya. Whereas the nation in which the quality of Rajas predominates is not so long-lived, but a nation with a preponderance of Sattva is, as it were, immortal. History is a witness to this fact.

In India, the quality of Rajas is almost absent; the same is the case with Sattva in the West. It is certain, therefore, that the real life of the Western world depends upon the influx, from India, of the current of Sattva or transcendentalism; and it is also certain that unless we overpower and submerge our Tamas by the opposite tide of Rajas, we shall never gain any worldly good or welfare in this life; and it is also equally certain that we shall

meet many formidable obstacles in the path of realisation of those noble aspirations and ideals connected with our after-life.

The one end and aim of the "Udbodhana" is to help the union and intermingling of these two forces, as far as it lies in its power.

True, in so doing there is a great danger—lest by this huge wave of Western spirit, are washed away all our most precious jewels, earned through ages of hard labour; true, there is fear lest falling into its strong whirlpool, even the land of Bharata forgets itself so far as to be turned into a battle-field in the struggle after earthly enjoyments;—aye, there is fear too, lest going to imitate the impossible and impracticable foreign ways, rooting out as they do our national customs and ideals—we lose all that we hold dear in this life and be undone in the next !

To avoid these calamities we must always keep the wealth of our own home before our eyes, so that every one down to the masses may always know and see what his own ancestral property is, we must exert ourselves to do that; and side by side, we should be brave to open our doors to receive all available light from outside. Let rays of light come in, in sharp-driving showers from the four quarters of the earth; let the intense flood of light flow in from the West—what of that ? Whatever is weak and corrupt is liable to die—what are we to do with it ? If it goes, let it go, what harm does it do to us ? What is strong and invigorating, is immortal. Who can destroy that ?

How many gushing springs and roaring cataracts, how many icy rivulets and ever-flowing streamlets, issuing from the eternal snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas, combine and flow together to form the gigantic river of the gods, the Ganges, and rush impetuously towards the ocean ! So, what a variety of thoughts and ideas, how many currents of forces, issuing from innumerable saintly hearts, and from brains of geniuses of various lands have already enveloped India, the land of Karma, the arena for the display of higher human activities ! Look ! how under the dominion of the English, in these days of electricity, railroad and steamboat, various sentiments, manners, customs and morals are spreading all over the land with lightning speed. Nectar is coming, and along with it, also poison; good is coming, as well as evil. There has been enough of angry opposition and bloodshed; the power of stemming this tide is not in Hindu society.

Everything, from water filtered by machinery and drawn from hydrants, down to sugar purified with bone-ash, is being quietly and freely taken by almost every one, in spite of much show of verbal protest Slowly and slowly, by the strong dint of law, many of our most cherished customs are day by day falling off—we have no power to withstand that And why is there no power? Is truth really powerless? "Truth alone conquers and not falsehood,"—Is this Divine Vedic saying false? Or who knows but that those very customs which are being swept away by the deluge of the power of Western sovereignty or of Western education were not real Acharas, but were Anacharas, after all. This also is a matter for serious consideration.

"For the good of the many, as well as for the happiness of the many," in an unselfish manner, with a heart filled with love and reverence, the "Udbodhana" invites all wise and large-hearted men who love their motherland to discuss these points, and solve these problems, and being devoid of the feeling of hatred or antagonism, as well as turning itself away from the infliction of abusive language directed towards any individual, or society, or any sect, it offers its whole self for the service of all classes.

To work we have the right, the result is in the hands of the Lord. We only pray—"O Thou Eternal Spirit, make us spiritual, O Thou Eternal Strength, make us strong, O Thou Mighty One, make us mighty"

6

A PLAN OF WORK FOR INDIA

SWAMI VIVEKANAND

It is with a heart full of love, gratitude and trust that I take up my pen to write to you Let me tell you first, that you are one of the few men that I have met in my life who are thorough in their convictions You have a whole-souled possession of a wonderful combination of feeling and knowledge, and withal a practical ability to bring ideas into realised forms Above all, you are sincere, and as such I confide to you some of my ideas

The work has begun well in India, and it should not only be kept up but pushed on with the greatest vigour Now or never is the time. After taking a far and wide town of things, my mind has now been concentrated on the' following plan. First, it would be well to open a Theological College in Madras, and then gradually extend its scope, to give a thorough education to young men in the Vedas and the different Bhashyas and Philosophies, including a knowledge of the other religions of the world. At the same time a paper in English and the vernacular should be started as an organ of the College.

This is the first step to be taken, and huge things grow out of small undertakings. Madras just now is following the golden mean by appreciating both the ancient and modern phases of life.

I fully agree with the educated classes in India that a thorough overhauling of society is necessary. But how to do it ?

The destructive plans of reformers have failed. My plan is this. We have not done *badly* in the past; certainly not. Our society is not *bad* but good, only I want it to be better still. Not from error to truth, nor from bad to good, but from truth to higher truth, from good to better, best. I tell my countrymen that so far they have done well—now is the time to do better.

Now take the case of caste. In Sanskrit Jati, i.e., species—now, this is the first idea of creation. Variation (Vichitrata), that is to say Jati, means creation. "I am One, I become many" (various Vedas). Unity is before creation, diversity is creation. Now if this diversity stops, creation will be destroyed. So long as any species is vigorous and active it must throw out varieties. When it ceases or is stopped from breeding varieties, it dies. Now the original idea of Jati was this freedom of the individual to express his nature, his Prakriti, his Jati, his caste, and so it remained for thousands of years. Not even in the latest books is inter-dining prohibited; nor in any of the older books is inter-marriage forbidden. Then what was the cause of India's down-fall ?—the giving up of this idea of caste. As Gita says, with the extinction of cases the world will be destroyed. Now does it seem true that with the stoppage of these variations the world will be destroyed The present caste is not the real Jati, but a hindrance to its progress. It really has prevented the free action of Jati, i.e , caste or variation. Any crystallised custom or privilege or hereditary class in any shape really prevents caste (Jati) from having its full sway and whenever any nation ceases to produce this immense variety, it must die. Therefore, what I have to tell you, my countrymen, is this :—That India fell because you prevented and abolished caste. Every frozen aristocracy or privileged class is a blow to caste and is not-caste. Let Jati have its sway, break down every barrier in the way of caste, and we shall rise. Now look at Europe. When it succeeded in giving free scope to caste and took away most of the barriers that stood in the way of individuals, each developing his caste—Europe rose. In American, there is the best scope for caste (real Jati) to develop; and so the people are great. Every Hindu knows that astrologers try to fix the caste of every boy or girl as soon as he or she is born. That is the real caste—the individuality, and *Joytish* recognises that we can only rise by giving it full sway again. The variety does not mean inequality, nor any special privilege.

This is my method—to show the Hindus that they have to give up nothing, but only to move on in the line laid down by the sages and shake off their inertia, the result of centuries of servitude. Of course, we had to stop advancing during the Mohammedan tyranny, for then it was not a question of progress but of life and death Now that the pressure has gone, we must move forward, not on the lines of destruction directed by renegades and missionaries, but along our own line, our own road Everything is hideous because the building is unfinished We had to stop building during centuries of oppression. Now finish the building and everything will look beautiful in its own place. This is all my plan I am thoroughly convinced of this. Each nation has a main current in life, in India it is religion. Make it strong and the waters on either side must move along with it This is one phase of my line of thought In time, I hope to bring them all out, but at present I find I have a mission in this country, also. Moreover, I expect help in this country and from here alone But up to date I could not do anything except spread my ideas. Now I want that a similar attempt be made in India

I do not know when I shall go over to India I obey the leading of the Lord I am in His hands

"In this world in search of wealth Thou art, O Lord, the greatest jewel I have found I sacrifice myself unto Thee."

"In search of some one to love, Thou art the One Beloved I have found I sacrifice myself unto Thee" (Yajur Veda Samhita)

My the Lord bless you for ever and ever !

7

TO THE AWAKENED INDIA*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Once more awake !

For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life
Anew, and rest to lotus-eyes, for visions
Daring yet. The world in need awaits, O Truth !
No death for thee !

Resume thy march,

With gentle feet that would not break the
Peaceful rest, even of the road-side dust
That lies so low Yet strong and steady,
Blissful, bold and free. Awakener, ever
Forward ! Speak thy stirring words.

Thy home is gone,

Where loving hearts had brought thee up, and
Watched with joy thy growth. But Fate is strong—
This is the law—all things come back to the source
They sprung, their strength to renew.

*Written to Prabuddha Bharata or Awakened India, in Aug., 1898.

Then start afresh

From the land of thy birth, where vast cloud-belted
Snows do bless and put their strength in thee,
For working wonders new. The heavenly
River tune thy voice to her own immortal song;
Deodar shades give thee eternal peace.

And all above,

Himala's daughter Uma, gentle, pure,
The Mother that resides in all as Power
And Life, who works all works, and
Makes of One the world, whose mercy
Opes the gate to Truth, and shows
The One in All, give thee untiring
Strength, which is Infinite Love.

They bless thee all,

The seers great, whom age nor clime
Can claim their own, the fathers of the
Race, who felt the heart of Truth the same,
And bravely taught to man ill-voiced or
Well. Their servant, thou hast got
The secret—'tis but One.

Then speak, O Love !—

Before thy gentle voice serene, behold how
Visions melt, and fold on fold of dreams
Departs to void, till Truth and Truth alone,
In all its glory shines—

And tell the world—

Awake, arise, and dream no more !
This is the land of dreams, where Karma
Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,
Of flowers sweet or noxious, and none

Has root or stem, being born in naught, which
The softest breath of Truth drives back to
Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face
The Truth ! Be one with it ! Let visions cease,
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free

8

OUR DUTY TO THE MASSES*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Sri Narayana bless you and yours. Through your Highness kind help it has been possible for me to come to this country. Since then I have become well known here, and the hospitable people of this country have supplied all my wants. It is a wonderful country and this is a wonderful nation in many respects. No other nation applies so much machinery in their everyday work as do the people of this country Everything is machine Then again, they are only one-twentieth of the whole population of the world. Yet they have fully one-sixth of all the wealth of the world. There is no limit to their wealth and luxuries. Yet everything here is so dear The wages of labour are the highest in the world; yet the fight between labour and capital is constant.

Nowhere on earth have women so many privileges as in America They are slowly taking everything into their hands and, strange to say, the number of cultured women is much greater than that of cultured men Of course, the higher geniuses are mostly from the rank of males With all the criticism of the Westerners against our caste, they have a worse one—that of money The almighty dollar, as the Americans say, can do anything here

No country on earth has so many laws, and in no country are they so little regarded On the whole, our poor Hindu people are

*Written from Chicago to H H the Maharajah of Mysore on June 23, 1884.

infinitely more moral than any of the Westerners. In religion they practise here either hypocrisy or fanaticism. Sober-minded men have become disgusted with their superstitious religions and are looking forward to India for new light. Your Highness cannot realise without seeing how eagerly they take in any little bit of the grand thoughts of the holy Vedas, which resist and are unharmed by the terrible onslaughts of modern science. The theories of creation out of nothing, of a created soul, and of the big tyrant of a God sitting on a throne in a place called heaven, and of the eternal hell-fires, have disgusted all the educated; and the noble thoughts of the Vedas about the eternity of creation and of the soul, and about the God in our own soul, they are imbibing fast in one shape or other. Within fifty years the educated of the world will come to believe in the eternity of both soul and creation, and in God as our highest and perfect nature, as taught in our holy Vedas. Even now their learned priests are interpreting the Bible in that way. My conclusion is that they require more spiritual civilisation, and we, more material.

The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. The poor in the West are devils; compared to them ours are angles, and it is therefore so much the easier to raise our poor. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality.* That is the great task between our people and princes. Up to now nothing has been done in that direction. Priest-power and foreign conquest have trodden them down for centuries, and at last the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings. They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas—that is the only help they require, and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallisation comes in the law of nature. Our duty is to put ideas into their heads, they will do the rest. This is what is to be done in India. It is this idea that has been in my mind for a long time. I could not accomplish it in India, and that was the reason of my coming to this country. The great difficulty in the way of educating the poor, in this. Supposing even your Highness opens a free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the poverty in India is such, that the

poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields, or otherwise try to make a living, than come to the school. Now if the mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him There are thousands of single-minded, self-sacrificing Sannyasins in our own country, going from village to village, teaching religion If some of them can be organised as teachers of secular things also, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a camera, a globe, some maps, etc They can teach a great deal of astronomy and geography to the ignorant But telling stories about different nations, they can give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a lifetime through books. This requires an organisation, which again means money. Men enough there are in India to work out this plan, but alas! they have no money It is very difficult to set a wheel in the motion, but when once set, it goes on with increasing velocity. After seeking help in my own country and failing to get any sympathy from the rich, I came over to this country through your Highness' aid The Americans do not care a bit whether the poor of India die or live And why should they, when our own people never think of anything but their own selfish ends ?

My noble Prince, this life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive One such high, noble-minded and royal son of India as your Highness, can do much towards raising India on her feet again, and thus leave a name to posterity which shall be worshipped

That the Lord may make your noble heart feel intensely for the suffering millions of India sunk in ignorance, is the prayer of—

9

THE BASIS FOR PSYCHIC OR SPIRITUAL RESEARCH*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

One point I wanted to remark upon It is a mistaken statement that has been made to us that the Mohammedans do not believe that woman have souls I am very sorry to say it is an old mistake among Christian people and they seem to like the mistake That is a peculiarity in human nature, that people want to say something very bad about others whom they do not like By the by, you know I am not a Mohammedan, but yet I have had opportunities for studying this religion, and there is not one word in the Koran which says that women have no souls, but in fact it says they have

About the psychical things that have been the subject of discussion, I have very little to say here, for in the first place, the question is whether psychical subjects are capable of scientific demonstration What do you mean by this demonstration ? First of all, there will be the subjective and the objective side necessary Taking chemistry and physics, with which we are so familiar, and of which we have read so much, is it true that everyone in this world is able to understand the demonstration even of the commonest subjects ? Take any boor and show him one of your experiments, what will he understand of it ? Nothing. It requires a

*During a discussion in London of a lecture, "Can Psychic Phenomena be proved from a Scientific basis ?

good deal of previous training to be brought up to the point of understanding an experiment. Before that he cannot understand it at all. That is a great difficulty in the way. If scientific demonstration means bringing down certain facts to a plane which is universal for all human beings, where all beings can understand it, I deny that there can be any such scientific demonstration for any subject in the world. If it were so, all our universities and education would be in vain. Why are we educated, if by birth we can understand everything scientific ? Why so much study ? It is of no use whatsoever. So, on the face of it, it is absurd if this be the meaning of scientific demonstration, the bringing down of intricate facts to the plane on which we are now. The next meaning should be the correct one, perhaps—that certain facts should be adduced as proving certain more intricate facts. There are certain more complicated, intricate phenomena, which we explain by less intricate ones, and thus get, perhaps, nearer to them; in this way they are gradually brought down to the plane of our present ordinary consciousness. But even this is very complicated, and very difficult, and means a training also, a tremendous amount of education. So all I have to say is that in order to have scientific explanation of psychical phenomena, we require not only perfect evidence on the side of the phenomena themselves, but a good deal of training on the part of those who want to see. All this being granted, we shall be in a position to say yea or nay, about the proof or disproof of any phenomena which are presented before us. But, before that, the most remarkable phenomena, or the most off-recorded phenomena that have happened in human society, in my opinion, would be very hard indeed to prove even in an off-hand manner.

Next, as to those hasty explanations, that religions are the outcome of dreams—those who have made a particular study of them would think of them but as mere guesses. We have no reason to suppose that religions were the outcome of dreams, as has been so easily explained. Then it would be very easy indeed to take even the agnostic's position, but unfortunately the matter cannot be explained so easily. There are many other wonderful phenomena happening, even at the present time, and these have all to be investigated, and not only have to be, but have been investigated all along. The blind man says there is no sun. That does not prove that there is no sun. These phenomena have been

investigated years before. Whole races of mankind have trained themselves for centuries to become fit instruments for discovering the fine workings of the nerves; their records have been published ages ago, colleges have been created to study these subjects, and men and women there are still who are living demonstrations of these phenomena. Of course, I admit that there is a good deal of hoax in the whole thing, a good deal of what is wrong and untrue in these things, but with what is this not the case ? Take any common scientific phenomenon; there are two or three facts which either scientists or ordinary men may regard as absolute truths, and the rest as mere frothy suppositions. Now let the agnostic apply the same test to his own science which he would apply to what he does not want to believe ! Half of it would be shaken to its foundation at once. We are bound to live on suppositions. We cannot live satisfied where we are; that is the natural growth of the human soul. We cannot become agnostics on this side and at the same time go about seeking for anything here; we have to peek. And, for this reason, we have to get beyond our limits, struggle to know what seems to be unknowable; and this struggle must continue.

In my opinion, therefore, I go really one step further than the lecturer, and advance the opinion that most of the psychical phenomena—not only little things, like spirit-rappings, to table-rappings, which are mere child's play, not merely little things like telepathy, which I have seen boys do even—most of the psychical phenomena which the last speaker calls the higher clairvoyance, but which I would rather beg to call the experiences of the super-conscious state of the mind, are the very stepping-stones to real psychological investigation. The first thing to be seen is whether the mind can attain to that state or not. My explanation would, of course, be a little different from his, but we should probably agree when we explain terms. Not much depends on the question whether this present consciousness continues after death or not, seeing that this universe, as it is now, is not bound to this state of consciousness. Consciousness is not co-existent with existence. In my own body, and in all of our bodies, we must all admit that we are conscious of very little of the body, and of the greater part of it we are unconscious. Yet it exists. Nobody is ever conscious of his brain, for example. I never saw my brain, and I am never conscious of it. Yet I know that it exists. Therefore, we may say

that it is not consciousness that we want, but the existence of something which is not this gross matter, and that that knowledge can be gained even in this life, and that that knowledge has been gained and demonstrated, as far as any science has been demonstrated, is a fact We have to look into these things, and I would insist on reminding those who are here present on one other point. It is well to remember that very many times we are deluded on this Certain people place before us the demonstration of a fact which is not ordinary to the spiritual nature, and we reject that fact because we say we cannot find it to be true. In many cases the fact may not be correct, but in many cases, also, we forget to consider whether we are fit to receive the demonstration or not, whether we have permitted our bodies and our minds to become fit subjects for their discovery.

10

HINTS ON PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

I shall try to present to you some ideas about breathing and other exercises We have been discussing theories so long that now it will be well to have a little of the practical A great many books have been written in India upon this subject Just as your people are practical in many things, so it seems our people are practical in this line Five persons in this country will join their heads together and say, "We will have a joint-stock company," and in five hours it is done, in India they could not do it in fifty years, they are so unpractical in matters like this. But, mark you, if a man starts a system of philosophy, however wild its theory may be, it will have followers For instance, a sect is started to teach that if a man stands on one leg for twelve years, day and night, he will get salvation—there will be hundreds ready to stand on one leg All the suffering will be quietly borne. There are people who keep their arms upraised for years to gain religious merit I have seen hundreds of them And, mind you, they are not always ignorant fools, but are men who will astonish you with the depth and breadth of their intellect. So, you see the word practical is also relative

We are always making this mistake in judging others, we are always inclined to think that our little mental universe is all that is, our ethics, our morality, our sense of duty, our sense of utility,

*Lecture Delivered at the Home of Truth, Los Angeles, California.

are the only things that are worth having. The other day when I was going to Europe, I was passing through Marseilles, where a bull-fight was being held. All the Englishmen in the steamer were mad with excitement, abusing and criticising the whole thing as cruel. When I reached England, I heard of a party of prize-fighters who had been to Paris, and were kicked out unceremoniously by the French, who thought prize-fighting very brutal. When I hear these things in various countries, I begin to understand the marvellous saying of Christ : "Judges not that ye be not judged " The more we learn the more we find out how ignorant we are, how multi-form and multi-aided is this mind of man. When I was a boy I used to criticise the ascetic practices of my countrymen; great preachers in our own land have criticised them; the greatest man that was over born. Buddha himself, criticised them. But all the same, as I am growing older, I feel that I have no right to judge. Sometimes I wish that, inspite of all their incongruities, I had one fragment of their power to do and suffer. Often I think that my judgment and my criticism do not proceed from any dislike of torture, but from sheer cowardice—because I cannot do it—I dare not do it.

Then, you see that strength, power and courage are things which are very peculiar. We generally say a courageous man, a brave man, a daring man, but we must bear in mind that that courage or bravery or any other trait does not always characterise the man. The same man who would rush to the mouth of a cannon shrinks from the knife of the surgeon and another man who never dares to face a gun, will calmly bear a severe surgical operation, if need be. Now, in judging others you must always define your terms of courage or greatness. The man whom I am criticising as not good may be wonderfully so in some points in which I am not.

Take another example; you often note, when people are discussing as to what man and woman can do, always the same mistake is made. They think they show man at his best because he can fight, for instance and undergo tremendous physical exertion, and this is pitted against the physical weakness and the non-combating quality of women. This is unjust. Woman is as courageous as man. Each is equally good in his or her way. What man can bring up a child with such patience, endurance, and love as the woman can ? The one has developed the power of

doing; the other, the power of suffering. If woman cannot act, neither can man suffer. The whole universe is one of perfect balance. I do not know, but some day we make up and find that the mere worm has something which balances our manhood. The moral wicked person may have some good qualities that I entirely lack, I see that every day of my life. Look at the savage, I wish I had such a splendid physique. He eats, he drinks, to his heart's content, without knowing perhaps what sickness is, while I am suffering every minute. How many times would I have been glad to have changed my brain for his body ! The whole universe is only a wage and a hollow; there can be no wave without a hollow. Balance, everywhere. You have one thing great, your neighbour has another thing great. When you are judging man and woman, judge them by the standard of their respective greatness. One cannot be in the other's shoes. The one has no right to say that the other is wicked. It is the same old superstition that says, "If this is done, the world will go to ruin." But inspite of this the world has not yet come to ruin. It was said in this country that if the Negroes were freed, the country would go to ruin—but did it ? It was also said that if the masses were educated, the world will come to ruin—but it was only made better. Several years ago a book came out depicting the worst thing that could happen to England. The writer showed that as workman's wages were rising, English commerce was declining. A cry was raised that the workmen in England were exorbitant in their demands, and that the Germans worked for less wages. A commission was sent over to Germany to investigate this and it reported that the German labourers received higher wages. Why was it so ? Because of the education of the masses. Then how about the world going to ruin if the masses are educated ? In India, especially, we meet with old fogies all over the land. They want to keep everything secret from the masses. These people come to the very satisfying conclusion that they are the *creme da la creme* of this universe. They believe they cannot be hurt by these dangerous experiments. It is only the masses that can be hurt by them !

Now, coming back to the practical. The subject of the practical application of psychology has been taken up in India from very early times. About fourteen hundred years before Christ, there flourished in India a great philosophy, Patanjali by

name. He collected all the facts, evidences and researches in psychology and took advantage of all the experiences accumulated in the past. Remember, this world is very old; it was not created only two or three thousand years ago. It is taught here in the West that society began eighteen hundred years ago, with the New Testament. Before that there was no society. That may be true with regard to the West but it is not true as regards the whole world. Often while I was lecturing in London, a very intellectual and intelligent friend of mine would argue with me, and one day after using all his weapons against me, he suddenly exclaimed, 'But why did not your Rishis come to England to teach us?" I replied, "Because there was no England to come to. Would they preach to the forests?"

"Fifty years ago," said Ingersol to me, "you would have been hanged in this country if you had come to preach. You would have been burned alive or you would have been stoned out of the villages."

So there is nothing unreasonable in the supposition that civilisation existed fourteen hundred years before Christ. It is not yet settled whether civilisation has always come from the lower to the higher. The same arguments and proofs that have been brought forward to prove this proposition can also be used to demonstrate that the savage is only a degraded civilised man. The people of China, for instance, can never believe that civilisation sprang from a savage state, because the contrary is within their experience. But when you talk of the civilisation of America, what you mean is the perpetuity and the growth of your own race.

It is very easy to believe that the Hindus, who have been declining for seven hundred years, were highly civilised in the past. We cannot prove that it is noted.

There is not one single instance of any civilisation being spontaneous. There was not a race in the world which became civilised unless another civilised race came and mingled with that race. The origin of civilisation must have belonged, so to say, to one or two races who went abroad, spread their ideas and intermingled with other races and thus civilisation spread.

For practical purposes, let us talk in the language of modern science. But I must ask you to bear in mind that, as there is religious superstition, so also there is a superstition in the matter

of science. There are priests who take up religious work as their speciality; so also there are priests of physical law, scientists. As soon as a great scientific name, like Darwin or Huxley, is cited, we follow blindly. It is the fashion of the day. Ninety-nine per cent of what we call scientific knowledge is mere theories. And many of them are no better than the old superstitions of ghosts with many heads and hands, but with this difference, that the latter differentiated man a little from stocks and stones. True science asks us to be cautious. Just as we should be careful with the priests, so we should be with the scientists. Begin with disbelief Analyse, test, prove everything, and then take it. Some of the most current beliefs of modern science have not been proved. Even in such a science as mathematics, the vast majority of its theories are only working hypotheses. With the advent of greater knowledge they will be thrown away.

In 1400 B.C. a great sage made an attempt to arrange, analyse and generalise upon certain psychological facts. He was followed by many others who took up parts of what he had discovered and made a special study of them. The Hindus alone of all ancient races took up the study of this branch of knowledge in right earnest. I am teaching you now about it, but how many of you will practise it ? How many days, how many months will it be before you give it up ? You are impractical on this subject. In India, they will persevere for ages and ages. You will be accomplished to hear that they have no churches, no Common Prayers, or anything of the kind; but they, every day, soil practise the breathings and try to concentrate the mind, and that is the chief part of their devotion. These are the main points. Every Hindu must do these. It is the religion of the country. Only, each one may have a special method—a special form of breathing, a special form of concentration, and what is one's special method, even one's wife need not know; the father need not know the son's. But they all have to do these. And there is nothing occult about these things The word "occult" has no bearing on them. Near the Ganges thousands and thousands of people may be seen daily sitting on its banks breathing and concentrating with closed eyes. There may be two reasons that make certain practices impracticable for the generality of mankind. One is the teachers hold that the ordinary people are not fit for them. There may be some truth in this, but it is due more to pride. The second is the fear

of persecution. A man, for instance, would not like to practise breathing publicly in this country, because he would be thought so queer; it is not the fashion here. On the other hand, in India, if a man prayed, "Give us this day our daily bread", people would laugh at him. Nothing could be more foolish to the Hindu mind then to say, "Our Fathers which art in Heaven." The Hindu, when he worships, thinks that God is within himself.

According to the Yogis, there are three principal nerve currents : one they call the Ida, the other the Pangala, and the middle one the Sushumna, and all these are inside the spinal column. The Ida and the Pingala, the left and the right, are clusters of nerves, while the middle one, the Sushumna, is hollow and is not a cluster of nerves. This Sushumna is closed, and for the ordinary man is of no use, for he works through the Ida and the Pingala only. Currents are continually going down and coming up through these nerves, carrying orders all over the body through other nerves running to the different organs of the body.

It is the regulation and the bringing into rhythm of the Ida and Pingala that is the great object of breathing. But that itself is nothing—it is only so much air taken into the lungs; except for purifying the blood, it is of no more use. There is nothing occult in the air that we take in with our breath and assimilate to purify the blood; the action is merely a motion. This motion can be reduced to the unit movement we call Prana; and everywhere, all movements are the various manifestations of this Prana. This Prana is electricity, it is magnetism, it is thrown out by the brain as thought. Everything is Prana; it is moving the sun, the moon, and the stars.

We say, whatever is in this universe has been projected by the vibration of the Prana. The highest result of vibration is thought. If there be any higher, we cannot conceive of it. The nerves, Ida and Pingala, work through the Prana. It is the Prana that is moving every part of the body, becoming the different forces. Give up that old idea that God is something that produces the effect and sits on a throne dispensing justice. In working we become exhausted because we use up so much Prana.

The breathing exercises, called Pranayama, bring about regulation of the breathing, rhythmic action of the Prana. When the Prana is working rhythmically, everything works properly.

When the Yogis get control over their own bodies, if there is any disease in any part, they know that the Prana is not rhythmic there and they direct the Patna to the affected part until the rhythm is re-established.

Just as you can control the Prana in your own body, so, if you are powerful enough, you can control, even from here another man's Prana in India. It is all one. There is no break; unity is the law. Physically, mentally, morally, metaphysically, it is all one. Life is only a vibration. That which vibrates this ocean of other, vibrates you. Just as in a lake, various strata of ice of various degrees of solidity are formed, or as in an ocean of vapour there are various degrees of density, so is this universe an ocean of matter. This is an ocean of ether, in which we find the sun, moon, stars, and ourselves—in different states of solidity; but the continuity is not broken; it is the same throughout.

Now, when we study metaphysics, we come to know the world is one, not that the spiritual, the material, the mental, and the world of energies are separate. It is all one, but seen from different planes of vision. When you think of yourself as a body, you forget that you are a mind, and when you think of yourself as a mind, you will forget the body. There is only one thing, that you are, you can see it either as matter or body—or you can see it as mind or spirit. Birth, life and death are but old superstitions. None was ever born, none will ever die; one changes one's position—that is all. I am sorry to see in the West how much they make of death; always trying to catch a little life. Give us life after death ! Give us life !" They are so happy if anybody tells them that they are going to live afterwards ! How can I ever doubt such a thing ! How can I imagine that I am dead ! Try to think of yourself as dead, and you will see, that you are present to see your own dead body. Life is such a wonderful reality that you cannot for a moment forget it. You may as well doubt that you exist. This is the first fact of consciousness—I am. Who can imagine a state of things which never existed ? It is the most self-evident of all truths. So, the idea of immortality is inherent in man. How can one discuss a subject that is unimaginable ? Why should we want to discuss the *pros* and *cons* of a subject that is self-evident ?

The whole universe, therefore, is a unit, from whatever standpoint you view it. Just now, to us, this universe is a unit

of Prana and Akasha, force and matter. And mind you, like all other basic principles, this is also self-contradictory. For what is force ?—that which moves matter. And what is mater ?—that which is moved by force. It is a see-saw ! Some of the fundamentals of our reasoning are most curious, inspite of our boast of science and knowledge "It is a headache without a head," as the Sanskrit proverb says. This state of things has been called Maya. It has neither existence nor non-existence. You cannot call it existence, because that only exists which is beyond time and space, which is self-existent. Yet this world satisfies to a certain degree our idea of existence. Therefore, it has an apparent existence.

But there is the real existence in and through everything; and that reality, as it were, is caught in the meshes of time, space and causation. There is the real man, the infinite, the beginningless, the endless, the ever-blessed, the ever-free. He has been caught in the meshes of time, space and causation. So has everything in this world. The reality of everything is the same infinite. This is not idealism, it is not that the world does not exist. It has a relative existence, and fulfils all its requirements. But it has no independent existence. It exists because of the Absolute Reality, beyond time, space, and causation.

I have made long digressions. Now, let us return to our main subject.

All the automatic movements and all the conscious movements are the working of Prana, through the nerves. Now you see, it will be a very good thing to have control over the unconscious actions.

On some other occasion, I told you the definition of God and man. Man is an infinite circle whose circumference is nowhere, but the centre is located in one spot; and God is an infinite circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is everywhere. He works through all hands, sees through all eyes, walks on all feet, breathes through all bodies, lives in all life, speaks through every mouth, and thinks through every brain. Man can become like God and acquire control over the whole universe, if he multiplies infinitely his centre of self-consciousness. Consciousness, therefore, is the chief thing to understand. Let us say that here is an infinite line amid darkness. We do not see the line, but on it there is one luminous point which moves on. As it moves along

the line, it lights up its different parts in succession, and all that is left behind becomes dark again. Our consciousness may well be linked to this luminous point. Its past experiences have been replaced by the present, or have become sub-consciousness. We are not aware of their presence in us, but there they are, unconsciously influencing our body and mind. Every movement that is now being made without the help of consciousness was previously conscious. Sufficient impetus has been given to it to work of itself.

The great error in all ethical systems, without exception, has been the failure of teaching the means by which man could refrain from doing evil. All the systems of ethic teach, "Do not steal!" Very good, but why does a man steal? Because all stealing, robbing, and other evil actions, as a rule, have become automatic. The systematic robber, thief, liar, unjust man and woman, are all these inspite of themselves! It is really a tremendous psychological problem. We should look upon man in the most charitable light. It is not so easy to be good. What are you but mere machines until you are free? Should you be proud because you are good? Certainly not. You are good because you cannot help it. Another is bad because he cannot help it. If you were in his position, who knows what you would have been? The woman in the street, or the thief in the jail, is the Christ that is being sacrificed that you may be a good man. Such is the law of balance. All the thieves, and the murderers, all the unjust, the weakest, the wickedest, the devils, they all are my Christ! I owe a worship to the God Christ and to the demon Christ! That is my doctrine, I cannot help it. My salutation goes to the feet of the good, the saintly, and to the feet of the wicked and the devilish! They are all my teachers, all are my spiritual fathers, all are my Saviours. I may curse one and yet benefit by his failings, I may bless another and benefit by his good deeds. This is as true as that I stand here. I have to sneer at the woman walking in the street, because society wants it! She, my Saviour. she, whose street-walking is the cause of the chastity of other women! Think of that. Think, men and women, of this question in your mind. It is a truth—a bare, bold truth! As I see more of the world, see more of men and women, this conviction grows stronger. Whom shall I blame? Whom shall I praise? Both sides of the shield must be seen.

The task before us is vast, and first and foremost, we must seek to control the vast mass of sunken thoughts which have become automatic with us. The evil deed is, no doubt, on the conscious plane, but the cause which produced the evil deed was far beyond in the realms of the unconscious, unseen, and therefore more potent.

Practical psychology directs first of all its energies in controlling the unconscious, and we know that we can do it. Why ? Because we know the cause of the unconscious is the conscious; the unconscious thoughts are the submerged millions of our old conscious thoughts, old conscious actions becomes petrified—we do not look at them, do not know them, have forgotten them. But, mind you, if the power of evil is in the unconscious, so also is the power of good. We have many things stored in us as in a pocket. We have forgotten them, do not even think of them, and there are many of them, rotting, becoming positively dangerous; they come forth, the unconscious causes which kill humanity. True psychology would therefore try to bring them under the control of the conscious. The great task is to revive the whole man, as it were, in order to make him the complete master of himself. Even what we call the automatic action of the organs within our bodies, such as the liver, etc., can be made to obey our commands.

This is the first part of the study, the control of the unconscious. The next is to go beyond the conscious. Just as unconscious work is beneath consciousness, so there is another work which is above consciousness. When this superconscious state is reached, man becomes free and divine; death becomes immortality, weakness becomes infinite power and iron bondage becomes liberty. That is the goal, the infinite realm of the superconscious.

So, therefore, we see now that there must be a two-fold work. First, by the proper working of the Ida and the Pingala, which are the two existing ordinary currents to control the sub-conscious action; and secondly, to go beyond even unconsciousness.

The books say that he alone is the Yogi who, after long practice in self-concentration, has attained to this truth. The Sushumna now opens and a current which never before entered into this new passage will find its way into it, and gradually ascend to (what we call in figurative language) the different lotus centres,

till at last it reaches the brain. Then the Yogi becomes conscious of what he really is, God Himself.

Every one without exception, every one of us, can attain to this culmination of Yoga. But it is a terrible task. If a person wants to attain to this truth, he will have to do something more than to listen to lectures and take a few breathing exercises. Everything lies in the preparation. How long does it take to strike a light ? Only a second; but how long it takes to make the candle ! How long does it take to eat a dinner ? Perhaps half an hour. But hours to prepare the food ! We want to strike the light in a second, but we forget that the making of the candle is the chief thing.

But thought it is so hard to reach the goal, yet even our smallest attempts are not in vain. We know that nothing is lost. In the Gita, Arjuna asks Krishna : Those who fail in attaining perfection in Yoga in this life, are they destroyed like the clouds of summer ? Krishna replies : Nothing, my friend, is lost in this world. Whatever one does, that remains as one's own, and if the fruition of Yoga does not come in this life, one takes it up again in the next birth. Otherwise, how do you explain the marvellous childhood of Jesus, Buddha, Sankara ?

Breathing, posturing, etc., are no doubt helps in Yoga but they are merely physical. The great preparations are mental. The first thing necessary is a quiet and peaceable life.

If you want to be a Yogi, you must be free, and place yourself in circumstances where you are alone and free from all anxiety. He who desires a comfortable and nice life and at the same time wants to realise the Self is like the food who, wanting to cross the river, caught hold of a crocodile, mistaking it for a log of wood. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and everything shall be added unto you." This is the one great duty, this is renunciation. Live for an ideal, and leave no place in the mind for anything else. Let us put forth all our energies to acquire that which never fails—our spiritual perfection. If we have true yearning for realisation, we must struggle, and through struggle growth will come. We shall make mistakes but they may be angels unaware.

The greatest help to spiritual life is meditation (Dhyana). In meditation we divest ourselves of all material conditions and feel our divine nature. We do not depend upon any external help in meditation. The touch of the soul can paint the brightest

colour even in the dingiest places, it can cast a fragrance over the vilest thing, it can make the wicked divine—and all enmity, all selfishness is effaced The less the thought of the body the better. For it is the body that drags us down. It is attachment, identification, which makes us miserable. That is the secret : To think that I am the Spirit and not the body, and that the whole of this universe with all its relations, with all its good and all its evil, is but as a series of paintings, scenes on a canvas; of which I am the witness

11

THE POWERS OF THE MIND

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

All over the world there has been the belief in the supernatural throughout the ages All of us have heard of extraordinary happenings, and many of us have had some personal experience of them I would rather introduce the subject by telling you certain facts which have come within my own experience I once heard of a man who, if any one went to him with questions in his mind, would answer them immediately, and I was also informed that he foretold events I was curious, and went to see him with a few friends We each had something in our minds to ask, and, to avoid mistakes, we wrote down our questions and put them in our pockets As soon as the man saw one of us, he repeated our questions, and gave the answers to them Then he wrote something on paper, which he folded up, asked me to sign on the back, and said, "Don't look at it, put in your pocket, and keep it there till I ask for it again" And so on to each one of us. He next told us about some events that would happen to us in the future. Then he said "Now, think of a word or a sentence, from any language you like" I thought of a long sentence from Sanskrit, a language of which he was entirely ignorant. "Now, take out the paper from your pocket," he said The Sanskrit sentence was written there! He had written it an hour before with the remark, "In confirmation of what I have written, this man will

*Speech Delivered at Los Angeles, California, January 8, 1900.

think of this sentence." It was correct. Another of us who had been given a similar paper which he had signed and placed in his pocket, was also asked to think of a sentence. He thought of a sentence in Arabia, which it was still less possible for the man to know; it was some passage from the Koran. And my friend found this written down on the paper.

Another of us was a physician. He thought of a sentence from a German medical book. It was written on his paper.

Several days later I went to this man again, thinking possibly I had been deluded somehow before. I book other friends, and on this occasion also he came out wonderfully triumphant.

Another time I was in the city of Hyderabad in India, and I was told of a Brahmin there, who could produce number of things from where, nobody knew. This man was in business there; he was a respectable gentleman. And I asked him to show me his tricks. It so happened that this man had a fever, and in India there is a general belief that if a holy man puts his hand on a sick man he would be well. This Brahmin came to me and said, "Sir, put your hand on my head, so that my fever may be cured." I said, "Very good; but you show me your tricks " He promised I put my hand on his head as desired, and later he came to fulfil his promise He had only a strip of cloth about his loins, we took of everything else from him. I had a blanket which I gave him to wrap round himself, because it was cold and made him sit in a corner. Twenty-five pairs of eyes were looking at him. And he said, "Now, look, write down anything you want." We all wrote down names of fruits that never grew in that country, bunches, of grapes, oranges and so on. And we gave him those bits of paper. And there came from under his blanket, bushels of grapes oranges, and so forth, so much that if all that fruit was weighed it would have been twice as heavy as the man. He asked us to eat the fruit. Some of us objected, thinking it was hypnotism—but the man began eating himself—so well all ate. It was all right.

He ended by producing a mass of roses. Each flower was perfect, with dew-drops on the petals, not one crushed, not one injured. And masses of them ! When I asked the man for an explanation, he said, "It is all sleight of hand."

Whatever it was, it seemed to impossible that it could be sleight of hand, merely. From whence could he have got such

large quantities of things ?

Well, I saw many things like that. Going about India you find hundreds of similar things in different places These are in every country Even in this country you will find some such wonderful things. Of course, there is a great deal of fraud, no doubt; but then, whenever you see fraud, you have also to say that fraud is an imitation There must be some truth somewhere, that is being imitated; you cannot imitate nothing Imitation must be of something substantially true.

In very remote times in India, thousands of years ago, these facts used to happen even more than they do today. It seems to me that when a country becomes very thickly populated, psychical power deteriorates. Given a vast country thinly inhabited, there will perhaps be more of psychical power there. These facts, the Hindus, being analytically minded, took up and investigated. And they came to certain remarkable conclusions; that is, they made a science of it. They found out that all these, though extraordinary, are also natural; there is nothing supernatural. They are under laws just the same as any other physical phenomena. It is not a freak of nature that a man is born with such powers. They can be systematically studied, practised and acquired. This science they call the science of Raja Yoga. There are thousands of people who cultivate the study of this science, and for the whole nation it has become a part of daily worship.

The conclusion they have reached is that all these extraordinary powers are in the mind of man. This mind is a part of the universal mind. Each mind is connected with every other mind. And each mind, wherever it is located, is in actual communication with the whole world.

Have you ever noticed the phenomenon that is called thought-transference ? A man here is thinking something and that thought is manifested in somebody else in same other place. With preparations—not by chance—a man wants to send a thought to another mind at a distance, and this other mind knows that a thought is coming and he receives it exactly as it is sent out. Distance makes no difference. The thought goes and reaches the other man and he understands it. If your mind were an isolated something here, and my mind were an isolated something there, and there were no connection between the two. how would it be

possible for my thought to reach you ? In the ordinary cases, it is not my thought that is reaching you direct; but my thought has got to be dissolved into ethereal vibrations and those ethereal vibrations go into your brain, and they have to be resolved again into your own thoughts. Here is a dissolution of thoughts, and there is a resolution of thought. It is a roundabout process. But in telepathy, there is no such thing it is direct.

This shows that there is a continuity of mind as the Yogis call it. The mind is universal. Your mind, my mind, all these little minds, are fragments of that universal mind, little waves in the ocean; and on account of this continuity, we can convey our thoughts directly to one another.

You see what is happening all around us. The world is one of influence. Part of our energy is used up in the preservation of our own bodies. Beyond that, every particle of our energy is day and night being used in influencing others. Our bodies, our virtues, our intellect, and our spirituality, all these are continuously influencing others; and so, conversely, we are being influenced by them This is going on all around us. Now, to take a concrete example; a man comes, you know he is very learned, his language is beautiful and he speaks to you by the hour—but he does not make any impression. Another man comes, and he speaks a few words, not well arranged, ungrammatical perhaps; all the same, he makes an immense impression. Many of you have seen that. So it is evident that words alone cannot always produce an impression. Words, even thoughts, contribute only one-third of the influence in making an impression, the man, two-thirds. What you call the personal magnetism of the man—that is what goes out and impresses you.

In our families there are the heads; some of them are successful, others are not Why ? We complain of others in our failures. The moment I am unsuccessful, I say, so-and-so is the cause of the failure. In failures, one does not like to confess one's own faults and weaknesses. Each person tries to hold himself faultless and lay the blame upon somebody or something else, or even on bad luck When heads of families fail, they should ask themselves, why it is that some persons manage a family so well and others do not. Then, you will find that the difference is owing to the man—his presence, his personality.

Coming to great leaders of mankind, we always find that it

was the personality of the man that counted. Now, take all the great authors of the past, the great thinkers. Really speaking, how many thoughts have they thought ? Take all the writings that have been left to us by the past leaders of mankind; take each one of their books and appraise them. The real thoughts, new and genuine, that have been thought in this world up to this time, amount to only a handful. Read in their books the thoughts they have left to us. The authors do not appear to be giants to us, and yet we know that they were great giants in their days. What made them so ? Not simply the thoughts they thought, neither the books they wrote, nor the speeches they made, it was something else that is now gone that is their personality. As I have already remarked, the personality of the man is two-thirds and his intellect, his words, are but one-third. It is the real man, the personality of the man, that runs through us. Our actions are but effects. Actions must come when the man is there; the effect is bound to follow the cause.

The ideal of all education, all training, should be this man-making. But, instead of that, we are always trying to polish up the outside. What use in polishing up the outside when there is no inside ? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The man who influences, who throws his magic, as it were upon his fellow-beings, is a dynamo of power, and when that man is ready, he can do anything and everything he likes; that personality put upon anything will make it work.

Now, we see that though this is a fact, no physical laws that we know of will explain this. How we explain it by chemical and physical knowledge. How much of oxygen, hydrogen, carbon—how many molecules in different positions, and how many cells, etc., can explain this mysterious personality ? And we still see it is a fact, and not only that, it is the real man; and it is that man that lives and moves and works, it is that man that influences, moves his fellow-beings, and passes out, and his intellect and books and works are but traces left behind. Think of this. Compare the great teachers of religion with the great philosophers. The philosophers scarcely influenced anybody's inner man, and yet they wrote most marvellous books. The religious teachers, on the other hand, moved countries in their lifetime. The difference was made by personality. In the philosopher it is a faint personality that influences; in the great Prophets it is tremendous. In the former

we touch the intellect, in the latter we touch life. In the one case it is simply a chemical process, putting certain chemical ingredients together which may gradually combine, and under proper circumstances bring out a flash of light, or may fail. In the other, it is like a torch that goes round quickly, lighting other.

The science of Yoga claims that it has discovered the Jaws which develop this personality, and by proper attention to those laws and methods, each one can grow and strengthen his personality. This is one of the great practical things and this is the secret of all education. This has a universal application. In the life of the house-holder, in the life of the poor, the rich, the man of business, the spiritual man, in every one's life, it is a great thing, the strengthening of this personality. There are laws, very fine, which are behind the physical laws, as we know. That is to say, there are no such realities as a physical world, a mental world, a spiritual world. Whatever is, is one. Let us say, it is a sort of tapering existence, the thickest part is here, it tapers and becomes finer and finer; the finest is what we call spirit; the grossest, the body. And just as it is here, in the microcosm, it is exactly the same in the macrocosm. This universe of ours is exactly like that; it is the gross external thickness, and it tapers into something finer and finer until it becomes God.

We also know that the greatest power is lodged in the fine, not in the coarse. We see a man take up a huge weight, we see his muscles swell, and all over his body we see signs of exertion, and we think the muscles are powerful things. But it is the thin thread-like things, the nerves, which bring power to the muscles; the moment one of these threads is cut-off from reaching the muscles, they are not able to work at all. These tiny nerves bring the power from something still finer, and that again in its turn brings it from something finer still—thought, and so on So, it is the fine that is really the seat of power Of course, we can see the movements in the gross but when fine movements take place, we cannot see them. When a gross thing moves, we catch it, and thus we naturally identify movement with things which are gross. But all the power is really in the fine. We do not see any movement in the fine, perhaps because the movement is so intense that we cannot perceive it. But if by any science, any investigation, we are helped to get hold of these finer forces which are the cause of the expression itself will be under control. There is a little

bubble coming from the bottom of a lake; we do not see it coming all the time, we see it only when it bursts on the surface, so, we can perceive thoughts only after they develop a great deal, or after they become actions. We constantly complain that we have no control over our actions, over our thoughts. But how can we have it ? If we can get control over the fine movements, if we can get hold of thought at the root, before it has become thought, before it has become action, then it would be possible for us to control the whole. Now, if there is a method by which we can analyse, investigate, understand and finally grapple with those finer powers, the finer causes, then alone is it possible to have control over ourselves, and the man who has control over his own mind assuredly will have control over every other mind. That is why purity and morality have been always the object of religion; a pure, moral man has control of himself. And all minds are the same different parts of one Mind. He who knows one lump of clay has known all the clay in the universe. He who knows and controls his own mind, knows the secret of every mind, and has power over every mind.

Now, a good deal of our physical evil we can get rid of, if we have control over the fine parts; a good many worries we can throw off, if we have control over the fine movements; a good many failures can be averted, if we have control over these fine powers. So far, is utility. Yet beyond, there is something higher.

Now, I shall tell you a theory, which I will not argue now, but simply place before you the conclusion. Each man in his childhood runs through the stages through which his race has come up; only the race took thousands of years to do it, while the child takes a few years. The child is first the old savage man—and he crushes a butterfly under his feet. The child is at first like the primitive ancestors of his race. As he grows, he passes through different stages until he reaches the development of his race. Only he does it swiftly and quickly. Now, take the whole of humanity as a race, or take the whole of the animal creation, man and the lower animals, as one whole. There is an end towards which the whole is moving. Let us call it perfection. Some men and women are born who anticipate the whole progress of mankind. Instead of waiting and being reborn over and over again for ages until the whole human race has attained to that perfection,

they, as it were, rush through them in a few short years of their life. And we know that we can hasten these processes, if we be true to ourselves. If a number of men, without any culture, be left to live upon an island, and are given barely enough food, clothing, they will gradually go on and on, evolving higher and higher stages of civilisation. We know also, that this growth can be hastened by additional means. We help the growth of trees, do we not ? Left to nature they would have grown, only they would have taken a longer time; we help them to grow in a shorter time than they would otherwise have taken. We are doing all the time the same thing, hastening the growth of things by artificial means Why cannot we hasten the growth of man ? We can do that as a race. Why are teachers sent to other countries ? Because by these means we can hasten the growth of races. Now, can we not hasten the growth of individuals ? We can. Can we put a limit to the hastening ? We cannot say how much a man can grow in one life. You have no reason to say that this much a man can do and no more. Circumstances can hasten him wonderfully. Can there be any limit then, till you come to perfection ? So, what comes of it ?—That a perfect man, that is to say, the type that is to come of this race, perhaps millions of years hence, that man, can come today. And this is what the Yogis say, that all great Incarnations and Prophets are such men; that they reached perfection in this one life. We have had such men at all periods of the world's history and at all times. Quite recently, there was such a man who lived the life of the whole human race and reached the end—even in this life. Even this hastening of the growth must be under laws. Suppose we can investigate these laws and understand their secrets and apply them to our own needs; it follows that we grow. We hasten our growth, we hasten our development, and we become perfect, even in this life. This is the higher part of our life, and the science of the study of mind and its powers has this perfection as its real end. Helping others with money and other material things and teaching them how to go on smoothly in their daily life, are mere details.

The utility of this science is to bring out the perfect man, and not let him wait and wait for ages, just a play things in the hands of the physical world like a log of drift-wood carried from wave to wave, and tossing about in the ocean. This science wants you

to be strong, to taken the work in your own hand, instead of leaving it in the hands of Nature, and get beyond this little life. That is the great idea.

Man is growing in knowledge, in power, in happiness. Continuously, we are growing as a race. We see that is true, perfectly true. Is it true of individuals ? To a certain extent, yes. But yet, again comes the question : Where do you fix the limit ? I can see only at a distance of so many feet. But I have seen a man close his eyes and see what is happening in another room. If you say you do not believe it, perhaps in three weeks that man can make you do the same. It can be taught to anybody. Some persons, in five minutes even, can be made to read what is happening in another man's mind. These facts can be demonstrated.

Now, if these things are true, where can we put a limit ? If a man can read what is happening in another's mind in the corner of this room, why not in the next room ? Why not anywhere ? We cannot say, why not. We dare not say that it is not possible. We can only say, we do not know how it happens. Material scientists have no right to say that things like this are not possible; they can only say. "We do not know." Science has to collect facts, generalise upon them, deduce principles and state the truth that is all. But if we begin by denying the facts, how can a science be ?

There is no end to the power a man can obtain. This is the peculiarity of the Indian mind, that when anything interests it, it gets absorbed in it and other things are neglected. You know how many sciences had their origin in India. Mathematics began there. Yon are even today counting—1, 2, 3, etc., to zero, after Sanskrit figures, and you all know that Algebra also originated in India, and that gravitation was known to the Indians thousands of years before Newton was born.

You see the peculiarity. At a certain period of Indian history, this one subject of man and his mind absorbed all their interest. And it was so enticing, because it seemed the easiest way to achieve their ends. Now, the Indian mind became so thoroughly persuaded that the mind could do anything and everything according to law, that its powers became the great object of study. Charms, magic and other powers, and all that, were nothing extraordinary, but a regularly taught science, just as the physical

sciences they had taught before that. Such a conviction in these things came upon the race that physical sciences nearly died out. It was the one thing that came before them. Different sects of Yogis began to make all sorts of experiments Some made experiments with light, crying to find out how lights of different colours produced changes in the body. They wore a certain coloured cloth, lived under a certain colour, and ate certain coloured foods. All sorts of experiments were made in this way. Others made experiments in sound, by stopping and unstopping their ears. And still others experimented in the sense of small, and so on.

The whole idea was to get at the basis, to reach the fine parts of the thing. And some of them really showed most marvellous powers. Many of them were trying to float in the air, or pass through it. I shall tell you a story which I heard from a great scholar in the West. It was told him by a Governor of Ceylon, who saw the performance. A girl was brought forward and seated cross legged upon a stool made of sticks crossed After she had been seated for a time, the show-man began to take out, one after another, these cross-bars; and when all were taken out, the girl was left floating in the air. The Governor thought there was some trick, so he drew his sword and violently passed it under the girl; nothing was there. Now, what was this ? It was not magic or something extraordinary. That is the peculiarity. No one in India would tell you that things like this do not exist. To the Hindu it is a matter of course. You know what the Hindus would often say when they have to fight their enemies—"Oh, one of our Yogis will come and drive the whole lot out !" It is the extreme belief of the race. What power is there in the hand or the sword ? The power is all in the spirit.

If this is true, it is temptation enough for the mind to exert its highest. But as with every other science it is very difficult to makes any great achievement, so also with this, any much more. Yet most people think that these powers can be easily gained. How many are the years you take to make a fortune ? Think of that ! First, how many years do you take to learn electrical science or engineering ? And then you have to work all the rest of your life.

Again, most of the other sciences deal with things that do not move, that are fixed. You can analyse the chair, the chair does

not fly from you. But this science deals with the mind, which moves all the time; the moment you want to study it, it slips. Now the mind is in one mood, the next moment perhaps it is different, changing, changing all the time. In the midst of all this change it has to be studied, understood, grasped, and controlled. How much more difficult, then, is this science! It requires rigorous training. People ask me why I do not give them practical lessons. Why, it is no joke. I stand upon this platform talking to you and you go home and find no benefit; nor do I. Then you say, "It is all bosh." It is because you wanted to make a bosh of it. I know very little of this science, but the little that I gained I worked for thirty years of my life, and for six years I have been telling people the little that I know. It took me thirty years to learn it; thirty years of hard struggle. Sometimes I worked at it twenty hours during the twenty-four; sometimes I slept only one hour in the night; sometimes I worked whole nights; sometimes I lived in places where there was hardly a sound, hardly a breath; sometimes I had to live in caves. Think of that. And yet I know little or nothing; I have barely touched the hem of the garment of this science. But I can understand that it is true and vast and wonderful.

Now, if there is any one amongst you who really wants to study this science, he will have to start with that sort of determination, the same as, nay even more than that which he puts into any business of life.

And what an amount of attention does business require, and what a rigorous taskmaster it is! Even if the father, the mother, the wife, or the child dies, business cannot stop! Even if the heart is breaking, we still have to go to our place of business, when every hour of work is a pang. That is business, and we think that it is just, that it is right.

This science calls for more application than any business can ever require Many men can succeed in business; very few in this. Because so much depends upon the particular constitution of the person studying it. As in business all may not make a fortune, but everyone can make something, so in the study of this science each one can get a glimpse which will convince him of its truth and of the fact that there have been men who realised it fully.

This is the outline of this science. It stands upon its own feet and in its own light, and challenges comparison with any other

science There have been charlatans, there have been magicians, there have been cheats, and more here than in any other field. Why ? For the same reason, that the more profitable the business, the greater the number of charlatans and cheats But that is no reason why the business should not be good And one thing more; it may be good intellectual gymnastics to listen to all the arguments and an intellectual satisfaction to hear of wonderful things But, if any one of you really wants to learn something beyond that, merely attending lectures will not do. That cannot be taught in lectures, for it is life, and life can only convey life If there are any amongst you who are really determined to learn it, I shall be very glad to help them

12

WORK AND ITS SECRET*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

One of the greatest lessons I have learned in my life is to pay as much attention to the means of work as to its end. He was a great man from whom I learned it, and his own life was a practical demonstration of this great principle I have been always learning great lessons from that one principle, and it appears to me that all the secret of success is there, to pay as much attention to the means as to the end

Our great defeat in life is that we are so much drawn to the ideal, the goal is so much more enchanting, so much more alluring, so much bigger in our mental horizon, that we lose sight of the details altogether

But whenever failure comes, if we analyse it critically in ninety-nine per cent of cases we shall find that it was because we did not pay attention to the means Proper attention to the finishing, strengthening, of the means, is what we need With the means all right, the end must come We forget that it is the cause that produces the effect, the effect cannot come by itself, and unless the causes are exact, proper and powerful, the effect will not be produced Once the ideal is chosen and the means determined, we may almost let go the ideal, because we are sure it will be there, when the means are perfected. When the cause is there, is no more difficulty about the effect, the effect is bound to come.

*Lecture Delivered at Los Angeles, California, January 4, 1900

If we take care of the cause, the effect will take care of itself. The realisation of the ideal is the effect. The means are the cause; attention to the means, therefore, is the great secret of life. We also read this in the Gita and learn that we have to work, constantly work with all our power; to put out whole mind in the work, whatever it be, that we are doing. At the same time, we must not be attached. That is to say, we must not be drawn away from the work by anything else but still we must be able to quit the work whenever we like

If we examine our own lives, we find that the gratest cause of sorrow is this, we take up something, and put our whole energy on it;—perhaps it is a failure, and yet we cannot give it up We know that it is hurting us, that any further clinging to it is simply bringing misery on us still, we cannot tear ourselves away from it. The bee came to sip the honey, but its feet stuck to the honey-pot and it could not get away. Again and again, we are finding ourselves in that state. That is the whole secret of existence. Why are we here ? We came here to sip the honey, and we find our hands and feet sticking to it. We are cought, though we came to catch. We came to enjoy; we are being enjoyed. We came to rule; we are being ruled. We came to work; we are being worked. All the time, we find that. And this comes into every detail of our life We are being worked upon by other minds, and we are always struggling to work on other minds. We want to enjoy the pleasures of life; and they eat into our vitals. We want to get everything from nature, but we find in the long-run that nature takes everything from us—depletes us, and casts us aside.

Had it not been for this, life would have been all sunshine. Never mind ! With all its failures and successes, with all its joys and sorrows, it can be one succession of sunshine, if we only are not caught.

That is the one cause of misery; we are attached, we are being caught. Therefore says the Gita : Work constantly; work, but be not attached; be not caught. Reserve unto yourself the power of detaching yourself from everything, however beloved, however much the soul might yearn for it, however great the pangs of misery you feel if you were going to leave it; still, reserve the power of leaving it whenever you want. The weak have no place here, in this life or in any other life. Weakness leads to slavery. Weakness leads to all kinds of misery, physical and mental. Weak-

ness is death. There are hundreds of thousands of microbes surrounding us, but they cannot harm us unless we become weak, until the body is ready and predisposed to receive them. There may be a million microbes of misery, floating about us. Never mind ! They dare not approach us, they have no power to get a hold on us, until the mind is weakened. This is the great fact; strength is life, weakness is death. Strength is felicity, life eternal, immortal; weakness is constant strain and misery; weakness is death.

Attachment is the source of all our pleasures now. We are attached to our friends, to our relatives; we are attached to our intellectual and spiritual works; we are attached to external objects, so that we get pleasure from them. What, again, brings misery but this very attachment ? We have to detach ourselves to earn joy. If only we had power to detach ourselves at will, there would not be any misery. That man alone will be able to get the best of nature, who, having the power of attaching himself to a thing with all his energy, has also the power to detach himself when he should do so. The difficulty is that there must be as much power of attachment as that of detachment. There are men who are never attracted by anything. They can never love, they are hard-hearted and apathetic; they escape most of the miseries of life. But the wall never feels misery, the wall never loves, is never hurt; but it is the wall, after all. Surely, it is better to be attached and caught, than to be a wall. Therefore, the man who never loves, who is hard and stony, escaping most of the miseries of life, escapes also its joys. We do not want that. That is weakness, that is death. That soul has not been awakened that never feels weakness, never feels misery. That is a callous state. We do not want that.

At the same time, we not only want this mighty power of love, this mighty power of attachment, the power of throwing our whole soul upon a single object, losing ourselves and letting ourselves be annihilated, as it were, for other souls—which is the power of the gods—but we want to be higher even than the gods. The perfect man can put his whole soul upon that one point of love, yet he is unattached. How comes this ? There is another secret to learn.

The beggar is never happy. The beggar only gets a dole, with pity and scorn behind it, at least with the thought behind that the

beggar is a low object. He never really enjoys what he gets.

We are all beggars. Whatever we do, we want a return. We are all traders. We are traders in life, we are traders in virtue, we are traders in religion. Alas ! we are also traders in love.

If you come to trade, if it is a question of give-and-take, if it is a question of buy-and-sell, abide by the laws of buying and selling. There is a bad time and there is a good time; there is a rise, and a fall in prices; always you expect the blow to come. It is like looking at the mirror. Your face is reflected : you make a grimace—there is one in the mirror; if you laugh, the mirror laughs. This is buying and selling, giving and taking.

We get caught. How ? Not by what we give, but by what we expect. We get misery in return for our love not from the fact that we love, but from the fact that we want love in return. There is no misery where there is no want Desire, want, is the father of all misery. Desires are bound by the laws of success and failure. Desires must bring misery.

The great secret of true success, of true happiness, then, is this: the man who asks for no return, the perfectly unselfish man, is the most successful. It seems to be a paradox. Do we not know that every man who is unselfish in life gets cheated, gets hurt ? Apparently, yes, "Christ was unselfish, and yet he was crucified." True, but we know that his unselfishness is the reason, the cause of a great victory—the crowning of millions upon millions of lives with the blessings of true success.

Ask nothing; want nothing in return. Give what you have to give; it will come back to you—but do not think of that now. It will come back multiplied a thousandfold—but the attention must not be on that. Yet have the power to give: give, and there it ends. Learn that the whole of life is giving, that nature will force you to give. So, give willingly Sooner or later you will have to give up. You come into life to accumulate. With clenched hands, you want to take. But nature puts a hand on your throat and makes your hands open. Whether you will it or not, you have to give. The moment you say, "I will not," the blow comes; you are hurt. None is there but will be compelled, in the long-run, to give up everything. And the more one struggles against this law the more miserable one feels. It is because we dare not give because we are not resigned enough to accede to this grand demand of nature, that we are miserable. The forest is gone, but

we get heat in return. The sun is taking up water from the ocean, to return it in showers You are a machine for taking and giving; you take, in order to give. Ask, therefore, nothing in return, but the more you give, the more will come to you. The quicker you can empty the air out of this room, the quicker it will be filled up by the external air; and if you close all the doors and every aperture, that which is within will remain, but that which is outside will never come in and that which is within will stagnate, degenerate and become poisoned. A river is continually emptying itself into the ocean and is continually filling up again. Bar not exit into the ocean. The moment you do that, death seizes you.

Be, therefore, not a beggar; be unattached. That is the most terrible task of life ! You do not calculate the dangers on the path. Even by intellectually recognising the difficulties, we really do not know them until we feel them. From a distance we may get a general view of a park, well, what of that ? We feel and really know it when we are in it. Even if our every attempt is a failure, and we bleed and are torn asunder, yet, through all this, we have to preserve our heart—we must assert our God head in the midst of all these difficulties. Nature wants us to react, to return blow for blow, cheating for cheating, lie for lie, to hit back with all our might. Then it requires a super-divine power not to hit back, to keep control, to be unattached.

Every day we renew our determination to be unattached. We cast our eyes back and look at the past objects of our love and attachment, and feel how every one of them made us miserable. We went down into the depths of despondency, because of our "love" ! We found ourselves mere slaves in the hands of others, we were dragged down and down ! And we make a fresh determination : "Henceforth, I will be master of myself; henceforth, I will have control over myself." But the times comes and the same story once more ! Again the soul is caught and cannot get out. The bird is in a net, struggling and fluttering. This is our life.

I know the difficulties. Tremendous they are, and ninety per cent of us become discouraged and lose heart, and in our turn, often become pessimists and cease to believe in sincerity, love, and all that is grand and noble. So, we find men who in the freshness of their lives have been forgiving kind, simple, and guideless become in old age, lying masks of men. Their minds are a mass of intricacy There may be a good deal of external policy, possibly.

They are not hot-headed, they do not speak, but it would be better for them to do not their hearts are dead and therefore they do not speak. They do not curse, nor become angry, but it would be better for them to be able to be angry, a thousand times better, to be able to curse. They cannot. There is death in the heart, for cold hands have seized upon it, and it can no more act, even to utter a curse, even to use a harsh world.

All this we have to avoid; therefore I say, we require super-divine power. Superhuman power is not strong enough. Super-divine strength is the only way, the one way out. By it alone we can pass through all these intricacies, through these showers of miseries, unscathed. We may be cut to pieces, torn asunder, yet our hearts must grow nobler and nobler all the time.

It is very difficult, but we can overcome the difficulty by constant practice. We must learn that nothing can happen to us, unless we make ourselves susceptible to it. I have just said, no disease can come to me until the body is ready; it does not depend alone on the germs, but upon a certain predisposition which is already in the body. We get only that for which we are fitted. Let us give up our pride and understand this, that never is misery undeserved. There never has been a blow undeserved, there never has been an evil for which I did not pave the way with my own hands. We ought to know that. Analyse yourselves and you will find that every blow you have received, came to you because you prepared yourselves for it You did half and the external world did the other half; that is how the blow came. That will sober us down. At the same time, from this very analysis will come a note of hope, and the note of hope is : "I have no control of the external world but that which is in me and nearer unto me, my own world, is in my control. If the two together are required to make a failure, if the two together are necessary to give me a blow, I will not contribute the one which is in my keeping and how then can the blow come ? If I get real control of myself, the blow will never come."

We are all the time, from our childhood, trying to lay the blame upon something outside ourselves. We are always standing up to set right other people, and not ourselves. If we are miserable, we say, "Oh, the world is a devil's world." We curse others, and say, "What infatuated fools !" But why should we be in such a world, if we really are so good ? If this is a devil's

world, we must be devils also, why, else, should we be here? "Oh, the people of the world are so selfish!" True enough, but why should we be found in that company, if we be better? Just think of that

We only get what we deserve It is a lie when we say, the world is bad and we are good It can never be so It is a terrible lie we tell ourselves

This is the first lesson to learn, be determined not to curse anything outside, not to lay the blame upon any one outside, but be a man, stand up, lay the blame on yourself You will find that is always true Get hold of yourself

Is it not a shame that at one moment we talk so much of our manhood, of our being gods, that we know everything, we can do everything, we are blameless, spotless, the most unselfish people in the world, and at the next moment a little stone hurts us, a little anger from a little Jack wounds us, any fool in the street makes "these gods" miserable! Should this be so if we are such gods? Is it true that the world is to blame? Could God, who is the purest and the noblest of souls, be made miserable by any of our tricks? If you are so unselfish, you are like God. What world can hurt you? You would go through the seventh hell unscathed, untouched But the very fact that you complain, and want to lay the blame upon the external world, shows that you feel the external world—the very fact that you feel, shows that you are not what you claim to be You only make your offence greater by heaping misery upon misery, by imagining that the external world is hurting you, and crying out, "Oh, this devil's world! This man hurts me, that man hurts me!" and so forth It is adding lies to misery

We are to take care of ourselves—that much we can do—and give up attending to others, for a time Let us perfect the means, the end will take care of itself. For the world can be good and pure, only if our lives are good and pure. It is an effect, and we are the means. Therefore, let us purify ourselves. Let us make ourselves perfect.

13

KNOWLEDGE : ITS SOURCE AND ACQUIREMENT*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Various have been the theories propounded as regards the primitive source of knowledge We read in the Upanishads that Brahma, who was the first and the foremost among the Devas, held the key to all knowledge, which he revealed to his disciples and which, being handed down in succession, has been bequeathed as a legacy to the subsequent age According to the Jains, during an indefinite period of a cycle of Time, which comprises between one thousand and two thousand billions of "oceans" of years, are born some extraordinary, great perfected beings, whom they call Jinas, and through them the door to knowledge is now and then opened to human society Likewise Buddhism believes in, and expects at regular intervals, the appearance of the Buddhas, that is, persons possessed of infinite universal wisdom The same is the reason also of the introduction of Incarnations of God by the Pauranika Hindus, who ascribe to them, along with other missions, the special function of restoring the lost spiritual knowledge by its proper adjustment to the needs of the time. Outside India, we find the great-souled Zoroaster bringing down the light of knowledge from above to the mortal world So also did Moses, Jesus and Mahomet, who, possessed of Heavenly Authority, proclaim to fallen humanity the tidings of Divine

*The *Udbodhana*, 12th February, 1899.

wisdom, in their own unique ways.

Brahma is the name of a high position among the Devas, to which every man can aspire, by virtue of meritorious deeds. Only a selected few can become Jinas, while others can never attain to Jinahood; but they can only go so far as to gain the state of Mukti. The state of being a Buddha is open to one and all, without distinction. Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus and Mahomet are great personalities, who incarnated themselves for the fulfilment of some special mission; so also did the Incarnations of God mentioned by the Pauranika sages. For others to look up to that seat of these divine personages with a longing eye is madness.

Adam got his knowledge through the tasting of the forbidden fruit. Noah was taught social science by the grace Jehovah. In India, the theory is that every science has its presiding deity, their founders are either Devas or perfected beings; from the most menial arts as that of a cobbler to the most dignified office of the spiritual guide, everything depends on the kind intervention of the gods or supreme beings. "No knowledge is possible without a teacher." There is no way to the statement of knowledge, unless it is transmitted through an apostolic succession from disciple to disciple—unless it comes through the mercy of the Guru, and direct from his mouth.

Then again, the Vedantic and other philsophers of the Indian schools hold that knowledge is not to be acquired from without. It is the innate nature of the human soul and the essential birthright of every man. The human soul is the repository of infinite wisdom; what external agency can illuminate it? According to some schools, this infinite wisdom remains always the same and is never lost; and man is not ordinarily conscious of this, because a veil, so to speak, has fallen over it on account of his evil deeds, but as soon as the veil is removed it reveals itself. Others say that this infinite wisdom, though potentially present in a human soul, has become contracted through evil deeds, and it becomes expanded again by the mercy of God, gained by good deeds. We also read in our Scriptures various other methods of unfolding this inborn infinite power and knowledge, such as—devotion to God, performance of work without attachment, practising the eight-fold accessories of the Yoga system, or constant dwelling on this knowledge, and so on. The final conclusion, however, is this, that through the practice of one, or more, or all

of these methods together, man gradually becomes conscious of his inborn real nature, and the infinite power and wisdom within, latent or veiled, becomes at last fully manifest.

On the other side, the modern philosophers have analysed the human mind as the source of infinitely possible manifestations, and have come to the conclusion that when the individual mind on the one hand, and favourable time, place and causation on the other, can act and react upon one another, then highly developed consciousness of knowledge is sure to follow. Nay, even the unfavourableness of time and place can be successfully surmounted by the vigour and firmness of the individual. The strong individual, even if he is thrown amidst the worst conditions of place or time, overcomes them and affirms his own strength. Not only so, all the heavy burdens heaped upon the individual, the acting agent, are being made lighter and lighter in the course of time, so that any individual, however weak he may be in the beginning, is sure to reach the goal at the end, if he assiduously applies himself to gain it. Look at the uncivilised and ignorant barbarians of the other day ! How through close and studious application, they are making long strides into the domains of civilisation, how even those of the lower strata are making their way and are occupying with an irresistible force the most exalted positions in it. The sons of cannibal parents are turning out elegant and educated citizens; the descendants of the uncivilised Santals, thanks to the English Government, have been nowadays meeting in successful competition our Bengali students in the Indian Universities. As such, the partiality of the scientific investigators of the present day to the doctrine of hereditary transmission of qualities is being gradually diminished.

There is a certain class of men whose conviction is that from time eternal there is a treasure of knowledge, which contains the wisdom of *everything* past, present and future. These men hold that it was their own forefathers who had the sole privilege of having the custody of this treasure. The ancient sages, the first possessors of it, bequeathed in succession this treasure and its true import to their descendants only. They are, now, therefore, the only inheritors to it, as such, let the rest of the world worship them.

May we ask these men what they think should be the condition of the other peoples who have not got such forefathers ?

"Their condition is doomed," is the general answer. The more kind hearted among them is perchance pleased to rejoin : "Well, let them come and serve us. As a reward for such service, they will be born in our caste, in the next birth. That is the only hope we can hold out to them." "Well, the moderns are making many new and original discoveries in the field of science and arts, which neither you dreamt of, nor is there any proof that your forefathers ever had knowledge of. What do you say to that ?" "Why certainly our forefathers knew all these things, the knowledge of which is now unfortunately lost to us. Do you want a proof ? I can show you one. Look ! Here is the Sanskrit verse . . ." Needless to add that the modern party, who believes in direct evidence only, never attaches any seriousness to such replies and proofs.

Generally, all knowledge is divided into two classes, the Apara, secular, and the Para, spiritual. One pertains to perishable things, and the other to the realm of the Spirit. There is, no doubt, a great difference between these two classes of knowledge, and the way to the attainment of the one may be entirely different from the way to the attainment of the other. Nor can it be denied that no one method can be pointed out as the sole and universal one, which will serve as the key to all and every door in the domain of knowledge. But, in reality, all this difference is only one of degree and not of kind. It is not that secular and spiritual knowledge are two opposite and contradictory things; but they are the same thing—the same infinite knowledge, which is everywhere fully present, from the lowest atom to the highest Brahman—they are the same knowledge in its different stages of gradual development. This one infinite knowledge we call secular when it is in its lower process of manifestation, and spiritual when it reaches the corresponding higher phase.

"All knowledge is possessed exclusively by some extraordinary great men, and those special personages take birth by the command of God, or in conformity to a higher Law of Nature, or in some preordained order of Karma; except through the agency of these great ones, there is no other way of attaining knowledge." If such a view be correct and certain, there seems to be no necessity for any individual to strive hard to find any new and original truth—all originality is lost to society for want of exercise and encouragement, and the worst of all is, that society tries to

oppose and stop any attempt in the original direction, and thus, the faculty of the initiative dies out. If it is finally settled that the path of human welfare is for ever chalked out by these omniscient men, society natuarally fears its own destruction if the least deviation be made from the boundary line of the path, and so it tries to compel all men through rigid laws and threats of punishment to follow that path with unconditional obedience. If society succeeds in imposing such obedience to itself by confining all men within the narrow groove of these paths, then the destiny of mankind becomes no better than that of a machine. If every act in a man's life has been all previously determined, then what need is there for the culture of the faculty of thought—where is the field for the free play of independent thoughtt and action ? In course of time, for want of proper use, all activity is given up, all originality is lost, a sort of Tamasika dreamy lifelessness hovers over the whole nation, and headlong it goes down and down. The death of such a nation is not far to seek.

On the other hand, if the other extreme were true—that that society prospers the most, which is not guided by the injunctions of such divinely-inspired souls—then, civilisation, wisdom and prosperity, deserting the Chinese, Hindus, Egyptians, Babylonians, Iranians, Greeks, Romans and other great nations of ancient and modern times, who have always followed the path laid down by their sages—would have embraced the Zulus, the Caffris, the Hot tentots and the aboriginal tribes of the Andamans and the Australian islands, who have led a life of guideless independence.

Considering all these points, it must be admitted that, though the presence of knowledge everywhere, in every individual, is an eternal truism, yet the path pointed out by the great ones of the earth has the glory peculiar to it, and that there is peculiar interest attached to the transmission of knowledge through the succession of teachers and their disciples. Each of them has its place in the development of the sum total of knowledge; and we must learn to estimate them according to their respective merits. But, perhaps, being carried away by their over-zealous and blind devotion to their Masters, the successors and followers of these great ones sacrifice truth before the altar of devotion and worship to them, and misrepresent the true meaning of the purpose of those great lives, by insisting on personal worship, that is, they kill the principle for the person.

This is also a fact of common experience, that when man himself has lost all his own strength, he naturally likes to pass his days in idle remembrance of his forefathers greatness The devoted heart gradually becomes the weakest in its constant attempt to resign itself in every respect to the feet of its ancestors, and at last a time comes when this weakness teaches the disabled yet proud heart to make the vainglory of its ancestors greatness as the only support of its life. Even if it be true that your ancestors possessed all knowledge, which has, in the efflux of time, been lost to you, it follows, that you, their descendants, must have been instrumental in this disappearance of knowledge, and now it is all the same to you whether you had it or not. To talk of having or losing this already lost knowledge serves no useful purpose at present. You will have to make new efforts, to undergo troubles over again, if you want to recover it.

True, that spiritual illumination shines of itself in a pure heart, and, as such, it is not something acquired from without; but to attain this purity of heart means long struggle and constant practice. It has also been found, on careful enquiry in the sphere of material knowledge, that those higher truths which have now and then been discovered by great scientific men, have flashed like sudden floods of light in their mental atmosphere, which they had only to catch and formulate. But such truths never appear in the mind of an uncultured and wild savage. All these go to prove that hard Tapasya, or practice of austerities, in the shape of devout contemplation and constant study of a subject, is at the root of all illumination, in its respective spheres.

What we call extraordinary, superconscious inspiration is only the result of a higher development of ordinary consciousness, gained by long and continued effort. The difference between the ordinary and the extraordinary is merely one of degree, in manifestation. Conscious efforts lead the way to superconscious illumination.

Infinite perfection is in every man, though unmanifested. Every man has in him the potentiality of attaining to perfect saintliness, Rishihood, or to the most exalted position of an Avatara, or to the greatness of a hero in material discoveries. It is only a question of time and adequate well-guided investigation, etc , to have this perfection manifested. In a society where once such great men were born, there the possibility of their

reappearance is greater There can be no doubt that a society with the help of such wise guides advances faster than the one without it But it is equally certain, that such guides will rise up in the societies that are now without them, and lead them to equally rapid progress in the future

14

KALI THE MOTHER

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The stars are blotted out,
    The clouds are covering clouds,
It is darkness vibrant, sonant.
    In the roaring, whirling wind
Are the souls of a million lunatics
    Just loose from the prison house,
Wrenching trees by the roots,
    Sweeping all from the path.
The sea has joined the fray,
    And swirls up mountain-waves,
To reach the pitchy sky,
    The flash of lurid light
Reveals on every side
    A thousand, thousand shades
Of Death begrimed and black—
    Scattering plagues and sorrows,
Dancing mad with joy.
    Come, Mother, come !
For Terror is Thy name,
    Death is in Thy breath,
And every shaking step
    Destroys a world for e'er.
Thou 'Time,' the All-Destroyer !
    Come, O Mother, come !

Who dares misery love,
    And hug the form of Death,
Dance is Destruction's dance,
    To him the Mother comes

15

INDIAN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

India, although only half the size of the United States, contains a population of over two hundred and ninety millions, and there are three religions which hold sway over them, the Mohammedan, the Buddhist[1] and the Hindu The adherents of the first mentioned number about sixty millions, of the second, about nine millions, while the last embrace nearly two hundred and six millions The cardinal features of the Hindu religion are founded on the meditative and speculative philosophy and on the ethical teachings contained in the various books of the Vedas, which assert that the universe is infinite in space and eternal in duration It never had a beginning, and it never will have an end Innumerable have been the manifestations of the power of the Spirit in the realm of matter, of the force of the Infinite in the domain of the finite, but the Infinite Spirit Itself is self-existent, and unchangeable The passage of time makes no mark whatever on the dial of eternity. In its supersensuous region which cannot be comprehended at all by the human understanding, there is no past, and there is no future The Vedas teach that the soul of man is immortal The body is subject to the law of growth and decay, what grows, must of necessity decay But the indwelling Spirit is related to the infinite and eternal life, it never had a

*Lecture Delivered under the auspices of the Brooklyn Ethical Society, in the Art Gallery of the Pouch Mansion, Clinton Avenue, Brooklyn, U.S.A.

beginning and it never will have an end. One of the chief distinctions between the Hindu and the Christian religion is that the Christian religion teaches that each human soul had its beginning at its birth into this world, whereas the Hindu religion asserts that the Spirit of man is an emanation of the Eternal Being, and had no more a beginning than God Himself Innumerable have been and will be its manifestations in its passage from one personality to another, subject to the great law of spiritual evolution, until it reaches perfection, when there is no more changes.

It has been often asked, if this be so, why is it we do not remember anything of our past lives? This is our explanation: Consciousness is the name of the surface only of the mental ocean, but within its depths are stored up all our experiences, both pleasant and painful. The desire of the human soul is to find out something that is stable. The mind and the body, in fact all the various phenomena of nature, are in a condition of incessant change. But the highest aspiration of our spirit is to find out something that does not change, that has reached a state of permanent perfection And this is the aspiration of the human soul after the Infinite! The finer our moral and intellectual development, the stronger will become this aspiration after the Eternal that changes not.

The modern Buddhists teach that everything that cannot be known by the five senses is non-existent, and that it is a delusion to suppose that man is an independent entity. The idealists, on the contrary, claim that each individual is an independent entity, and the external world does not exist outside of his mental conception But the sure solution of this problem is that nature is a mixture of independence and dependence, of reality and idealism. Our mind and bodies are dependent on the external world, and this dependence varies according to the nature of their relation to it, but the indwelling Spirit is free, as God is free, and is able to direct in a greater or lesser degree, according to the state of their development, the movements of our minds and bodies.

Death is but a change of condition. We remain in the same universe, and are subject to the same laws as before. Those who have passed beyond, and have attained high planes of development in beauty and wisdom, are but the advance-guard of a universal army, who are following after them. The spirit of the highest is related to the spirit of the lowest, and the germ of

infinite perfection exists in all. We should cultivate the optimistic temperament, and endeavour to see the good that dwells in everything. If we sit down and lament over the imperfection of our bodies and minds we profit nothing; it is the heroic endeavour to subdue adverse circumstances that carries our spirits upwards. The object of life is to learn the laws of spiritual progress. Christians can learn from Hindus, and Hindus can learn from Christians. Each has made a contribution of values of the wisdom of the world.

Impress upon your children that true religion is positive, and not regative. That it does not consist in merely refraining from evil, but in a persistent performance of noble deeds. True religion comes not from the teaching of men or the reading of books; it is the awakening of the Spirit within us, consequent upon pure and heroic action. Every child born into the world brings with it a certain accumulated experience from previous incarnations and the impress of this experience is seen in the structure of its mind and body. But the feeling of independence which possesses us all, shows there is something in us besides mind and body. The soul that reigns within is independent, and creates the desire for freedom. If we are not free, how can we hope to make the world better ? We hold that human progress is the result of the action of the human Spirit. What the world is, and what we ourselves are, are the fruits of the freedom of the Spirit.

We believe in one God, the Father of us all, who is omnipresent, and omnipotent, and who guides and preserves His children with infinite love. We believe in a Personal God as the Christians do, but we go further : we believe that we are He ! That His personality is manifested in us, that God is in us, and we are in God. We believe there is a germ of truth in all religions, and the Hindu bows down to them all, for, in this world, truth is to be found not in subtraction but in addition. We would offer God a bouquet of the most beautiful flowers of all the diverse faiths. We must love God for love's sake, not for the hope of reward. We must do our duty for duty's sake, not for the hope of reward. We must worship the beautiful for beauty's sake, not for the hope of reward. Thus in the purity of our hearts shall we see God. Sacrifices, genuflexions, mumblings and mutterings are not religion. They are only good if they stimulate us to the brave performance of beautiful and heroic deeds, and lift our

thoughts to the apprehension of the divine perfection.

What good is it, if we acknowledge in our prayers that God is the Father of us all, and in our daily lives do not treat every man as our brother? Books are only made so that they may point the way to a higher life, but no good results unless the path is trodden with unflinching steps! Every human personality may be compared to a glass globe. There is the same pure white light—an emission of the divine Being—in the centre of each, but the glass being of different colours and thickness, the rays assume diverse aspects in the transmission The equality and beauty of each central flame is the same, and the apparent inequality is only in the imperfection of the temporal instrument of its expression As we rise higher and higher in the scale of being, the medium becomes more and more translucent.

16

HINDUISM*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Three religions now stand in the world which have come down to us from time pre-historic—Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Judaism All of them have received tremendous shocks, and all of them prove by their survival their internal strength But while judaism failed to absorb Christianity and was driven out of its place of birth by its all-conquering daughter, and while a handful of Parsis is all that now remains to tell the tale of their grand religion, sect after sect arose in India, seeming to shake the religion of the *Vedas* to its very depths, but like the waters of the seashore in a tremendous earthquake, this would recede for a while, only to return in an all-absorbing flood, a thousand times more vigorous, and when the tumult of the rush was over, these sects were all sucked in, absorbed and assimilated into the immense body of the mother faith

All kinds of thought from the high spiritual flights of the *Vedanta* philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, down to the lowest ideas of idolatry, with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu religion

Where then, the question arises, where is the common centre upon which all these widely diverging radii converge ? Where is

*Lecture in Chicago on 19 Sept. 1893.

the common basis upon which all these seemingly hopeless contradictions rest ? And this is the question I shall now attempt to answer.

The Hindus have received their religion through revelation, the *Vedas*. They hold that the *Vedas* are without beginning and without end. It may sound ludicrous to this audience, that a book can be without beginning or end. But by the *Vedas* no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons at different times. Just as the law of gravitation acted before its discovery by humanity and would continue to act if all humanity forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The moral, ethical and spiritual relations that exist between soul and soul, and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirits, were there before our discovery of them, and would still remain, even if we forgot them.

The discoverers of these laws are called *Rishis*, and we honour them as perfected beings. I am glad to tell this audience that some of the very greatest of them were women.

Here it may be said that these laws as laws may be without end, but they must have had a beginning. Now the *Vedas* teach us that creation is without beginning or end. Science has proved to us that the sum-total of cosmic energy is always the same. Then, if there was a time when nothing existed, where was all this manifested energy ? Some say it was in a potential form in God. In that case God is sometimes potential and sometimes kinetic, which would make Him mutable. Everything mutable is a compound, and everything compound must undergo that change which is called destruction. So God would die, which is absured. Therefore, there never was a time when there was no creation.

If I may be allowed to use a simile, creator and creation are two lines, without beginning and without end, running parallel to each other. God is power, an ever-active providence, under whom system after system is being evolved out of chaos, made to run for a time, and again destroyed. This is what the Hindu boy repeats every day with his *Guru*. '*This sun and this moon, the Lord has created, like the suns and moons of provious cycles*'. And this agrees with modern science.

Here I stand, and if I shut my eyes, and try to conceive of my own existence, 'I,' 'I,' 'I,'—what is the idea before me ? The idea

of a body. Am I, then, nothing but a combination of material substances ? The *Vedas* declare, No. I am a spirit living in a body. I am not the body. The body will die, but I shall not die. Here am I in this body, and when it fails I shall still go on living. Also I had a past. The soul was not created out of nothing. For creation means a combination, and that again means a certain future dissolution. Hence if the soul was created, it must also die. Therefore, it was not created. Again, some are born happy, and enjoy perfect health, with beautiful bodies, mental vigour and all their wants supplied. Others are born miserable; some are without hands or feet; others again are idiots, and only drag out a wretched existence. Why, if they were all created, did a just and merciful God create one happy and the other unhappy, why was He so partial ? Nor does it in the least mend matters to hold that those who are miserable in this life will be perfect in a future one. Why should a man be miserable, even here, in the reign of a just and merciful God ? In the second place, this idea of the creator-God does not even attempt to assign any cause to the anomalies of creation, but simply postulates the cruel fiat of an all-powerful being. Thus, on the face of it, it is unscientific. There must have been causes, then, before his birth, to make a man, after it, miserable or happy, and those causes were his own past action.

Are not the tendencies of mind and body accounted for by aptitudes inherited from parents ? Here are two parallel lines of existence—one that of mind, the other that of matter. If matter and its transformations sufficiently answer for all that we are, there can be no necessity to suppose the existence of a soul. But it cannot be proved that thought has been evolved out of matter, and if monism is philosophically invitable; a spiritual monism is quite as logical and not less desirable than materialistic. But neither of these is necessary at this point.

We cannot deny that bodies acquire certain tendencies by heredity, but this refers only to the physical configuration, through which a particular tendency of the mind has to be manifested. The cause of such a particular tendency in that mind lies in its own past actions. And a soul with a certain tendency will by the laws of affinity take birth in that body which is the fittest instrument for the display of the tendency. This is in perfect accordance with science, for science wants to explain everything by habit is

acquired through repetition. So it is necessary to assume repetition in order to explain the natural habits of a new-born soul. And since these habits have not been arrived at in this present life, they must have come down from past lives.

There is another suggestion. Taking all this for granted, how is it that I do not remember anything of my past life? This can easily be explained. I am now speaking English. It is not my mother-tongue. In fact, no words of my mother-tongue are now present in my consciousness. But let me try for a moment to bring them up, and they rush in. This shows that consciousness is only the surface of the mental ocean, and that within its depths are stored up all our experiences. Only try and struggle. They will all come back, and you will be conscious even of your past lives.

This is direct and demonstrative evidence. Verification is the perfect proof of a theory, and here is the challenge thrown to the world by the *Rishis*: We have discovered the secret by which the very depths of the ocean of memory can be stirred up—try it and you will obtain the complete memory of your past lives. So then, the Hindu believes that he is a spirit.

'Him the sword cannot pierce—Him the fire cannot burn—Him the water cannot melt—Him the air cannot dry.' The Hindu believes that every soul is a circle whose circumference is nowhere, though its centre is located in the body; and that death only means the change of this centre from one body to another. Nor is the soul bound by the conditions of matter. In its very essence, it is free, unbounded, holy, pure and perfect. But somehow or other it finds itself bound down by matter, and thinks of itself as matter.

Why should the free, perfect and pure being be thus under the thraldom of matter?—is the next question. How can the perfect be deluded into the belief that he is imperfect? We have been told that Hindus shirk this question and say that it cannot be asked. Some thinkers want to answer it by positing one or more quasi-perfect beings, and use big scientific names to fill up the gap. But naming is not explaining. The question remains the same. How can the perfect become the quasi-perfect? How can the pure, the absolute, change even a microscopic particle of its nature? But the Hindu is sincere.—He does not want to take shelter under sophistry. He is brave enough to face the question

in a manly fashion. And his answer is, "I do not know how the perfect being, the soul, came to think of itself as imperfect, as joined to end conditioned by matter. But the fact is a fact for all that. It is a fact in every body's consciousness that he thinks of himself as the body." He does not attempt to explain why it is so, why one is in the body. The answer, that it is the will of God, is no explanation. This is nothing more than what the Hindu says, 'I do not know.'

Well, then, the human soul is eternal and immortal, perfect and infinite, and death means only a change of centre from one body to another. The present is determined by our past actions, and the future by the present. The soul will go on evolving up or reverting back from birth to birth and death to death. But here is another question : Is man a tiny boat in a tempest, raised one moment on the foaming crest of a billow and dashed down into a yawning chasm the next, rolled to and fro at the mercy of his own good and bad actions—a powerless, helpless wreck, in an ever-raging, ever-rushing, uncompromising current of cause and effect—a little moth placed under the wheel of causation, which rolls on crushing everything in its way, and waits not for the widow's tears or the orphan's cry ? The hearts sinks at the idea, yet such is the law of nature. Is there no hope ? Is there no escape ?—was the cry that went up from the depths of the heart of despair. It reached the throne of mercy, and words of hope and consolation came down and inspired a *Vedic* sage, and he stood up before the world and in trumpet voice proclaimed the glad tidings : 'Hear, ye children of immortal bliss ! even ye that reside in higher spheres ! I have found that Ancient One, who is beyond all darkness, and delusion : knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death again and again.' 'Children of immortal bliss !' - What a sweet what a hopeful name ! Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name—heirs of immortal bliss,--yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye are divinities on earth. Sinners ?—it is sin to call man so. It is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep ! You are souls immortal, spirits free, and eternal and blessed. Ye are not matter. Ye are not bodies. Matter is your servant, not you its slaves.

Thus it is that the *Vedas* proclaim not a dreadful combination of unforgiving laws, not an endless prison of cause and effect, but that at the head of all these laws in and through every particle of matter and force, stands One, 'by whose command the wind blows, the fire burns. the clouds rain, and death stalks upon the earth.'

And what is His nature ?

He is everywhere, the pure and formless One, the Almighty and the All-merciful. "Thou art our Father. Thou art our Mother. Thou art our beloved Friend. Thou art the source of all strength. Give us strength. Thou art He that beareth the burdens of the universe : help me to bear the little burden of this life !' Thus sang the *Rishis* of the *Vedas*. And how are we do worship Him ? Through love. 'He is to be worshipped as the one beloved, dearer than anything in this life or the next.'

This is the doctrine of love declared in the *Vedas*. Let us see how it is fully developed and preached by *Krishna*, whom the Hindus believe to have been God incarnate on earth.

He thought that a man ought to live in this world like a lotus-leaf, which grows in water but is never wet by the water; so a man ought to live in the world—his heart to God and his hand to work.

It is good to love God for the hope of reward in this world or the next, but it is better to love God for love's sake. And the prayer goes : 'Lord, I want neither wealth, nor children, nor learning. I will go through a hundred perils, if it be Thy will; but grant me only this, that I may love Thee without the hope of reward—unselfishly, love for love's own sake ' One of the disciples of *Krishna*, the then Emperor of India, was driven from his throne by his enemies and had to take shelter with his queen in a forest in the *Himalayas*. There one day the queen asked him how it was that he, the most virtuous of men, had to suffer so much misery ? *Yudhisthira* answered : 'Behold, my queen, the *Himalayas*, how grand and beautiful they are ! I love them. They do not give me anything. But my nature is to love the grand and the beautiful, and therefore do I love them. Similarly, I love the Lord. He is the source of all beauty, of all sublimity. He is the only object to be loved; my nature is to love Him, and therefore I love. I do not pray for anything; I do not ask for anything. Let Him place me wherever He likes. I must love Him

for love's sake, I cannot trade in love.'

The *Vedas* teach that the soul is divine, only held under the bondage of matter, and that perfection will be reached when the bonds shall break. And the word they use for salvation therefore is *mukti*—freedom, freedom from the bonds of imperfection, freedom from death and misery.

This bondage can only fall off through the mercy of God and this mercy comes to the pure. So purity is the condition of His mercy. How that mercy acts ? He reveals Himself to the pure heart; and the pure and stainless man sees God, yea, even in this life. Then and then only, all the crookedness of the heart is made straight. Then all doubt ceases. Man is no longer the sport of the terrible laws of causation. This is the very centre, the very vital conception of Hinduism. The Hindu does not want to live on words and theories. If there are existences beyond the ordinary sensuous existence, he wants to come face to face with them. If there is a soul in him which is not matter, if there is an all-merciful universal Soul, he will go to Him direct. He must see Him—That alone can destroy all doubts. So the best proof a Hindu sage gives about the soul, about God, is : 'I have seen the soul : I have seen God.' And that is the only condition of perfection. The Hindu religion does not consist in struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or dogma, but in realising, not in believing, but in being and becoming.

Thus the whole object of their system is by constant struggle to become perfect, to become divine to reach God, and see God, and this reaching God, seeing God, becoming perfect 'even as the Father in Heaven is perfect,' constitutes the religion of the Hindus.

And what becomes of a man when he attains perfection ? He lives a life of bliss infinite. He enjoys infinite and perfect bliss,—having obtained God, the only thing in which man ought to find pleasure,—and enjoys that bliss with God. So far all the Hindus are agreed. That is the common religion of all the sects of India.

But then the question comes, perfection is absolute, and the absolute cannot be two or three. It cannot have any qualities. It cannot be an individual. And so when a soul becomes perfect and absolute, it must become one with *Brahman*, and realise the Lord only as the reality and perfection, of its own nature and existence, —Existence absolute, Knowledge absolute, and Bliss absolute. We

have often and often read about this as the losing of individuality, and becoming a stock or a stone. 'He jests at scars that never felt a wound.'

I tell you it is nothing of the kind. If it is happiness to enjoy the consciousness of this small body, it must be greater happiness to enjoy the consciousness of two bodies, and so on, the measure of happiness increasing with the consciousness of an increasing number of bodies, hence the aim, the ultimate of happiness would be reached when it becomes a universal consciousness.

Therefore, to gain this infinite universal individuality, this miserable little prison-individuality must go. Then alone can death cease, when I am one with life; then alone can misery cease, when I am one with happiness itself, then alone can all errors cease, when I am one with knowledge itself, and this is the necessary scientific conclusion Science has proved to me that physical individuality is a delusion, that really my body is one little continuously changing body in an unbroken ocean of matter, and *Advaitam* (unity) is the necessary conclusion with my other counter part, Soul.

Science is nothing but the finding of unity. As soon as any science reached perfect unity, it would have to stop from further progress, because it had reached the goal. Thus Chemistry could progress no further if it once discovered that one element out of which all others could be made. Physics must stop if it were able to complete its service by discovering one energy of which all others were but manifestations, and the science of religion becomes perfect when it has discovered Him who is the one life in a universe of death, Him who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world, One who is the only Soul of which all souls are but delusive manifestations. Thus was it through multiplicity and quality that the ultimate unity was reached. Religion can go no further. This is the goal of all knowledge, science upon science—again and again.

All science is bound to come to his conclusion in the long-run. Manifestation, and not creation, is the world of science today, and the Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherishing in his bosom for ages is now going to be taught in more forcible language, and with further light, from the latest conclusions of science.

Descend we now from the aspirations of philosophy to the

religion of the ignorant. At the very outset, I may tell you that there is no polytheism in India. In every temple, if one stands by and listens, one will find the worshippers applying all the attributes of God, including omnipresence, to the images. It is not polytheism, nor would the name henotheism explain the situation. 'The rose called by any other name would smell as sweet.' Names are not explanations.

I remember, as a boy, hearing a Christian missionary preach to a crowd in India. Among other sweet things, he was saying to them that, if he gave a blow to their idol with his stick, what could it do ? One of his hearers sharply answered, 'If I abuse your God, what can He do ?' 'You would be punished,' said the preacher, 'when you die.' 'So my idol will punish you when you die !' retorted the Hindu. The tree is known by its fruits. When I have seen amongst those who are called idolaters, men, the like of whom, in morality and spirituality and love, I have never seen anywhere, I stop and ask myself, 'Can sin beget holiness ?'

Superstition is a great enemy of man, but bigotry is worse. Why does a Christian go to church ? What is the cross holy ? Why is the face turned towards the sky in prayer ? Why are there so many images in the Catholic Church ? Why are there so many images in the minds of Protestants when they pray ? My brethren, we can no more think about anything without a mental image, than we can live without breathing. By the law of association, the material image calls up the mental idea, and *vice versa*. This is why the Hindu uses an external symbol when he worships. He will tell you it helps to keep his mind fixed on the Being to whom he prays. He knows as well as you do that the image is not God, is not omnipresent. After all, how much does omnipresence mean to most men, to almost the whole world in fact ? It stands merely as a word, a symbol. Has God superficial area ? If not, when we repeat the word omnipresent we think of the extended sky or of space, that is all.

As we find that somehow or other, by the laws of our mental constitution, we have to associate our ideas of infinity with the image of the blue sky, or of the sea; so we naturally connect our idea of holiness with the image of a church, mosque or a cross. The Hindus have associated holiness, purity, truth, omnipresence, and such other ideas with different images and forms. But with this difference, while some people devote their whole lives to their

idol of a church and never rise higher, because with them religion means an intellectual assent to certain doctrines, and doing good to their fellows,—the whole religion of the Hindu is centred in realisation Man is to become divine by realising the divine. Idols, or temples, or churches, or books are only the supports, the helps, of his spiritual childhood, but on and on he must progress.

He must not stop anywhere. '*External worship, national worship*', say the *Vedas*, '*is the lowest stage; struggling to rise, mental prayer is the next stage; but the highest stage is when the Lord has been realised*'. Mark, the same earnest man who is kneeling before the idol tells you : '*Him the sun cannot express, nor the moon, nor the stars The lightning cannot express Him, nor what we speak of as fire. Through Him do all these shine*'. But he does not abuse anyone's idol or call its worship sin. He recognises in it a necessary stage of life. '*The child is the father of the man.*' Would it be right for an old man to say that childhood is a sin or youth a sin ?

Nor is the use of images compulsory in Hinduism. Only, if a man can realise his divine nature more easily with the help of an image, would it be right to call that a sin ? Nor even when he has passed that stage, should he call it an error. To the Hindu, man is not travelling from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth. To him, all religions, from the lowest fetichism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realise the Infinite, each determined by the conditions of its birth and association. Each of these marks a stage of progress; and every soul is a young eagle scaring higher and higher, gathering more and more strength, till reaches the Glorious Sun.

Unity in variety is the plan of nature, and the Hindu has recognised it. Every other religion lays down certain fixed dogmas, and tries to force the whole of the society to adopt them. They place before society one coat, which must fit Jack and John and Henry, all alike. If it should happen not to fit John or Henry, he must go without a coat to cover his body. The Hindus have discovered that the Absolute can only be realised, or thought of, or stated, through the relative, and that images, crosses and crescents are simply so many symbols,—so many pegs to hang the spiritual ideas on. It is not that this help is necessary for every one, but it is so many, and those who do not need it themselves,

have no right to say that it is wrong.

One thing I must tell you. Idolatry does not mean in India anything horrible. It is not the mother of harlots. On the other hand, it is the attempt of undeveloped minds to grasp high spiritual truths. The Hindus have their faults, they sometimes have their exceptions; but mark this, they are always for punishing their own bodies. and never for cutting the throats of their neighbours. If the Hindu fanatic burns himself on the pyre, he never lights the fire of Inquisition. And even this cannot be laid at the door of his religion any more than the burning of witches can be laid at the door of Christianity.

To the Hindu, then, the whole world of religion is only a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. Every religion is only an evolving of God out of the material man, and the same God is the inspirer of all of them. Why, then, are there so many contradictions ? They are only apparent, says the Hindu. The contradictions come from the same truth adapting itself to the varying circumstances of different natures.

It is the same light coming through glasses of different colour. And these little variations are necessary for purpose of adaptation. But in the heart of everything the same truth reigns. The Lord has declared to the Hindu in his incarnation as *Krishna*, '*I am in every religion as the thread through a string of pearls. Wherever thou seest extraordinary holiness and extraordinary power, raising and purifying humanity, know thou that I am there.*' And what has been the result ? I challenge the world to find, throughout the whole system of Sanskrit Philosophy, any such statement as that the Hindu alone will be saved and not others. Says *Vyasa*, '*We find perfect men even beyond the pale of our own caste and creed.*' One thing more. How, then, can the Hindu, whose whole fabric of thought centres in God, believe in Buddhism, which is agnostic, or in Jainism, which is atheistic?

The Buddhists and Jains do not depend upon God; but all the same the whole force of their religion is directed to that great central truth of every religion, the evolving of God out of man. They have not seen the Father, but they have seen the Son. And he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also.

This, brethren, is a short sketch of the religious ideas of the Hindus. The Hindu may have failed to carry out all his plans,

but if there is ever to be a universal religion, it must be one which holds no location in place or time, which is infinite, like the God it preaches, whose sun shines upon the followers of *Krishna* and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike, nor Brahmanic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mahommedan, but the sum-total of all these, yet still keeping infinite space for development, which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for every human being, from the lowest grovelling savage not far removed from the brute, to the highest man towering by the virtues of his head and heart almost above humanity, and making society stand in awe of him and doubt his human nature It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intoleration in its polity, which will recognise divinity in every man and woman, whose whole scope, whose whole force will be centred in aiding humanity to realise its own true and divine nature

Offer such a religion, and all the nations will follow you Asoka's council was a council of the Buddhist faith Akbar's though more to the purpose, was only a parlour-meeting It was reserved for America to proclaim to all the quarters of the globe that the Lord is in every faith

May He, who is the *Brahman* of the Hindus, the *Ahura-Mazda* of the Zoroastrians, the *Buddha* of the Buddhists, the *Jehovah* of the Jews, and the Father in Heaven of the Christians, give strength to you to carry out your noble idea The star arose in the East, it travelled steadily towards the West, sometimes dimmed and sometimes effulgent, till it made a circuit of the world, and now it is again rising on the very horizon of the East, the borders of the *Tasifu*, a thousand-fold more effulgent than ever it was before

Hail Columbia, motherland of liberty ! It has been given to thee, who hast never dipped thine hand in thy neighbour's blood, who hast never found out that the shortest way to become rich was to rob one's neighbours, it has been given to thee to march onwards, in the vanguard of civilization carrying the flag of harmony.

17

THE IDEAL OF A UNIVERSAL RELIGION

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

HOW IT MUST EMBRACE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MINDS AND METHODS

Wheresoever our senses reach, or whatsoever our minds imagine, we find therein the action and reaction of two forces, the one counteracting the other and causing the constant play of the mixed phenomena that we see around us, and of those which we feel in our minds. In the external world, the action of these opposite forces is expressing itself as attraction and repulsion, or as centripetal and centrifugal forces; and in the internal, as love and hatred, good and evil. We repel some things, we attract others. We are attracted by one, we are repelled by another. Many times in our lives, we find that without any reason whatsoever, we are, as it were, attracted towards certain persons, at other times, similarly, we are repelled by others. This is patent to all, and the higher the field of action, the more potent the more remarkable, are the influences of these opposite forces. Religion is the highest plane of human thought and life, and herein we find that the workings of these two forces have been most marked. The intensest love that humanity has ever known has come from religion, and the most diabolical hatred that humanity has known, has also come from religion. The noblest words of peace that the world has ever heard, have come from men on the religious plane, and the bitterest denunciation that the world has ever known, has

been uttered by religious men. The higher the object of any religion and the finer its organisation, the more remarkable are its activities. No other human motive has deluged the world with blood so much as religion, at the same time, nothing has brought into existence so many hospitals and asylums for the poor, no other human influence has taken such care, not only of humanity, but also of the lowest of animals, as religion has done. Nothing makes us so cruel as religion, and nothing makes us so tender as religion. This has been so in the past, and will also, in all probability, be so in the future. Yet out of the midst of this din and turmoil, this strife and struggle, this hatred and jealousy of religions and sects, there have arisen, from time to time, potent voices, drowning all this noise—making themselves heard from pole to pole, as it were,—proclaiming peace, and harmony. Will it ever come?

It is possible that there should ever reign unbroken harmony in this plane of mighty religious struggle? The world is exercised in the latter part of this century by the question of harmony; in society, various plans are being proposed, and attempts are made to carry them into practice, but we know how difficult it is to do so. People find that it is almost impossible to mitigate the fury of the struggle of life, to tone down the tremendous nervous tension that is man. Now, if it is so difficult to bring harmony and peace to the physical plane of life—the external, gross and outward side of it—then a thousand times more difficult is it to bring peace and harmony to rule over the internal nature of man. I would ask you for the time being to come out of the network of words, we have all been hearing from childhood of such things as love, peace, charity, equality, and universal brotherhood; but they have become to us mere words without meaning, words which we repeat like parrots, and it has become quite natural for us to do so. We cannot help it. Great souls, who first felt these great ideas in their hearts, manufactured these words, and at that time many understood their meaning. Later on, ignorant people have taken up those words to play with them, and made religion a mere play upon words, and not a thing to be carried into practice. It becomes "my father's religion," "our nation's religion," "our country's religion," and so forth. It becomes only a phase of patriotism to profess any religion, and patriotism is always partial. To bring harmony into religion must always be difficult. Yet we

will consider this problem of the harmony of religions.

We see that in every religion there are three parts—I mean in every great and recognised religion. First, there is the philosophy—which presents the whole scope of that religion, setting forth its basic principles, the goal and the means of reaching it. The second part is mythology, which is philosophy made concrete. It consists of legends relating to the lives of men, or of supernatural beings, and so forth. It is the abstractions of philosophy concretised in the more or less imaginary lives of men and supernatural beings. The third part is the ritual. This is still more concrete, and is made up of forms and ceremonies, various physical attitudes, flowers and incense, and many other things that appeal to the senses. In these consists the ritual. You will find that all recognised religions have three elements. Some lay more stress on one, some on another. Let us now take into consideration the first part, philosophy. Is there one universal philosophy? Not yet. Each religion brings out its own doctrines, and insists upon them as being the only true ones. And not only does it do that, but it think that he who does not believe in them, must go to some horrible place. Some even draw the sword to compel others to believe as they do. This is not through wickedness, but through a particular disease of the human brain called fanaticism. They are very sincere, these fanatics, the most sincere of human beings; but they are quite as irresponsible as other lunatics in the world. This disease of fanaticism is one of the most dangerous of all diseases. All the wickedness of human nature is roused by it. Anger is stirred up, nerves are strung high, and human beings become like tigers.

Is there any mythological similarity, is there any mythological harmony, any universal mythology accepted by all religions? Certainly not. All religions have their own mythology, only each of them says, "My stories are not mere myths." Let us try to understand the question by illustration. I simply mean to illustrate, I do not mean criticism of any religion. The Christian believes that God took the shape of a dove, and came down to earth; to him this is history, and not mythology. The Hindu believes that God is manifested in the cow. Christians say that to believe so is mere mythology, and not history, that it is superstition. The Jews think that if an image be made in the form of a box, or a chest, with an angel on either side, then it

may be placed in the Holy of Holies; it is sacred to Jehovah; but if the image be made in the form of a beautiful man or woman, they say, "This is a horrible idol, break it down!" This is our unity in mythology! If a man stands up and says, "My prophet did such and such a wonderful thing," others will say, "That is only superstition;" but at the same time they say that their own prophet did still more wonderful things, which they hold to be historical. Nobody in the world, as far as I have seen, is able to make out the fine distinction between history and mythology, as it exists in the brains of these persons. All such stories, to whatever religion they may belong, are really mythological, mixed up occasionally, it may be, with a little history.

Next come the rituals. One sect has one particular form of ritual, and thinks that is holy, while the rituals of another sect are simply arrant superstition. If one sect worships a peculiar sort of symbol, another sect says, "Oh, it is horrible" Take for instance a general form of symbol. The phallus symbol is certainly a sexual symbol, but gradually that aspect of it has been forgotten, and it stands now as a symbol of the Creator. Those nations which have this as their symbol never think of it as the phallus, it is just a symbol, and there it ends. But a man from another race or creed sees in it nothing but the phallus, and begins to condemn it; yet at the same time he may be doing something which to the so-called phallic worshiphers appears most horrible. Let me take two points for illustration, the phallus symbol and the sacrament of the Christians. To the Christians the phallus is horrible, and to the Hindus the Christian sacrament is horrible. They say that the Christian sacrament, the killing of a man and the eating of his flesh and the drinking of his blood to get the good qualities of that man, is cannibalism. This is what some of the savage tribes do; if a man is brave, they kill him and eat his heart, because they think that it will give them the qualities of courage and bravery possessed by that man. Even such a devout Christian as Sir John Lubbock admits this, and says that the origin of this Christian symbol is in this savage idea. The Christians, of course, do not admit this view of its origin; and what kind it may imply never comes to their mind. It stands for a holy thing, and that is all they want to know. So even in rituals there is no universal symbol, which can command general recognition and acceptance. Where then is any universality?

How is it possible then to have a universal form of religion? That, however, already exists. And let us see what it is.

We all hear about universal brotherhood, and how societies stand up especially to preach this. I remember an old story. In India, wine drinking is considered very bad. There were two brothers who wished, one night, to drink wine secretly; and their uncle, who was a very orthodox man, was sleeping in a room quite close to theirs. So, before they began to drink, they said to each other, "We must be very silent, or uncle will wake up." When they were drinking, they continued repeating to each other. "Silence! Uncle will wake up," each trying to about the other down. And, as the shouting increased, the uncle woke up, came into the room, and discovered the whole thing. Now, we all shout like these drunken men, "Universal brotherhood! We are all equal, therefore let us make a sect." As soon as you make a sect you protest against equality, and equality is more. Mohammedans talk of universal brotherhood, but what comes out of that in reality? Why, that anybody who is not a Mohammedan will not be admitted into the brotherhood; he will more likely have his throat cut. Christians talk of universal brotherhood; but anyone who is not a Christian must go to that place where he will be eternally barbecued.

And so we go on in this world in our search after universal brotherhood and equality. When you hear such talk in the world, I would ask you to be a little reticent, to take care of yourselves, for, behind all this talk is often the intensest selfishness. "In the winter sometimes a thunder-cloud comes up; it roars and roars, but it does not rain; but in the rainy season the clouds speak not, but deluge the world with water." So those who are *really* workers, and *really* feel at heart the universal brotherhood of man, do not talk much, do not make little sects for universal brotherhood; but their acts, their movements, their whole life, show out clearly that they in truth possess the feeling of brotherhood for mankind, that they have love and sympathy for all. They do not speak, they *do*, and they *live*. This world is too full of blustering talk. We want a little more earnest work, and less talk.

So far we see that it is hard to find any universal features in regard to religion, and yet we know that they exist. We are all human beings, but are we all equal? Certainly not. Who

says we are equal? Only the lunatic. Are we all equal in our brains, in our powers, in our bodies? One man is stronger than another, one man has, more brain power than another. If we are all equal, why is there this inequality? Who made it? We. Because we have more or less powers, more or less brain, more or less physical strength, it must make a difference between us. Yet we know that the doctrine of equality appeals to our heart. We are all human beings, but some are men, and some are women. Here is a black man, there is a white man, but all are men, all belong to one humanity. Various are our faces, I see no two alike, yet we are all human beings. Where is this one humanity? I find a man or a woman, either dark or fair, and among all these faces, I know that there is an abstract humanity which is common to all. I may not find it when I try to grasp it, to sense it, and actualise it, yet I know for certain that it is there. If I am sure of anything, it is of this humanity which is common to us all. It is through this generalised entity that I see you as a man or a woman. So it is with this universal religion, which runs through all the various religions of the world in the form of God; it must and does exist through eternity. "I am the thread that runs through all these pearls," and each pearl is a religion or even a sect thereof. Such are the different pearls, and the Lord is the thread that runs through all of them, only the majority of mankind are entirely unconscious of it.

Unity in variety is the plan of the universe. We are all men, and yet we are all distinct from one another. As a part of humanity, I am one with you, and as Mr. so-and-so I am different from you. As a man you are separate from the woman; as a human being you are one with the woman. As a man you are separate from the animal, but as living beings, man, woman, animal, and plant, are all one; and as existence, you are one with the whole universe. That universal existence is God, the ultimate Unity in the universe. In Him we are all one. At the same time, in manifestation, these differences must always remain. In our work, in our energies, as they are being manifested outside, these differences must always remain. We find then that if by the idea of a universal religion it is meant that one set of doctrines should be believed in by all mankind, it is wholly impossible; it can never be, there can be never be a time when all faces will be the same. Again, if we expect that there will be one universal mythology,

that is also impossible; it cannot be. Neither can there be one universal ritual. Such a state of things can never come into existence; if it ever did, the world would be destroyed, because variety is the first principle of life. What makes us formed beings? Differentiation. Perfect balance would be our destruction. Suppose the amount of heat in this room, the tendency of which is towards equal and perfect diffusion, gets that kind of diffusion, then for all practical purposes that heat will cease to be. What makes motion possible in this universe? Lost balance. The unity of sameness can come only when this universe is destroyed, otherwise such a thing is impossible. Not only so, it would be dangerous to have it. We must not wish that all of us should think alike. There would then be no thought to think. We should be all alike, as the Egyptian mummies in a museum, looking at each other without a thought to think. It is this difference, this differentiation, this losing of the balance between us, which is the very soul of our progress, the soul of all our thought. This must always be.

What then do I mean by the ideal of a universal religion? I do not mean any one universal philosophy, or any one universal mythology, or any one universal ritual, held alike by all; for I know that this world must go on working, wheel within wheel, this intricate mass of machinery, most complex, most wonderful. What can *we* do then? We can make it run smoothly, we can lessen the friction, we can grease the wheels, as it were. How? By recognising the natural necessity of variation. Just as we have recognised unity by our very nature, so we must also recognise variation. We must learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and that each of these ways is true as far as it goes. We must learn that the same thing can be viewed from a hundred different standpoints, and yet be the same thing. Take for instance the sun. Suppose a man standing on the earth looks at the sun when it rises in the morning; he sees a big ball. Suppose he starts on a journey towards the sun and takes a camera with him, taking photographs at every stage of his journey, until he reaches the sun. The photographs of each stage will be seen to be different from those of the other stages; in fact, when he gets back, he brings with him so many photographs of so many different suns, as it would appear; and yet we know that the same sun was photographed by the man at the different stages of his

progress. Even so is it with the Lord. Through high philosophy or low, through the most exalted mythology or the grossest, through the most refined ritualism or arrant fetishism, every sect, every soul, every nation, every religion, consciously or unconsciously, is struggling upward, towards God, every vision of truth that man has, is a vision of Him and of none else. Suppose we all go with vessels in our hands to fetch water from a lake. One has a cup, another a jar, another a bucket, and so forth, and we all fill our vessels The water in each case naturally takes the form of the vessel carried by each of us. He who brought the cup, has the water in the form of a cup; he who brought the jar,—his water is in the shape of a jar, and so forth; but, in every case, water, and nothing but water, is in the vesssl. So it is in the case of religion; our minds are like these vessels, and each of one of us is trying to arrive at the realisation of God. God is like that water filling these different vessels, and in each vessel, the vision of God comes in the form of the vessel. Yet He is One He is God in every case. This is the only recognition of universality that we can get.

So far it is all right theoretically, but is there any way of practically working out this harmony in religions ? We find that this recogn tion, that all the various views of religion are true, has been very very old. Hundreds of attempts have been made in India, in Alexandria, in Europe, in China, in Japan, in Tibet, and lastly in America, to formulate a harmonious religious creed, to make all religions come together in love. They have all failed, because they did not adopt any practical plan. Many have admitted that all the religions of the world are right, but they show no practical way of bringing them together, so as to enable each of them to maintain its own individuality in the conflux. That plan alone is practical, which does not destroy the individuality of any man in religion, and at the same time shows him a point of union with all others But so far, all the plans of religious harmony that have been tried, while proposing to take in all the various views of religion, have, in practice, tried to bind them all down to a few doctrines, and so have produced more new sects, fighting, struggling and pushing against each other.

I have also my little plan. I do not know whether it will work or not, and I want to present it to you for discussion. What is my plan ? In the first place I would ask mankind to recognise

this maxim—"Do not destroy." Iconoclastic reformers do no good to the world. Break not, pull not anything down, but build. Help, if you can, if you cannot, fold your hands and stand by and see things go on. Do not injure, if you cannot render help. Say not a word against any man's convictions so far as they are sincere. Secondly, take man where he stands, and from thence give him a lift. If it be true that God is the centre of all religions, and that each of us is moving towards Him along one of these radii, then it is certain that all of us *must* reach that centre. And at the centre, where all the radii meet, all our differences will cease, but until we reach there, differences there must be. All these radii converge to the same centre. One, according to his nature, travels along one of these lines, and another, along another; and if we all push onward along our own lines, we shall surely come to the centre, because, "All roads lead to Rome." Each of us is naturally growing and developing according to his own nature; each will in time come to know the highest truth, for after all, men must teach themselves. What can you and I do ? Do you think you can teach even a child ? You cannot. The child teaches himself. Your duty is to afford opportunities and to remove obstacles. A plant grows. Do *you* make the plant grow ? Your duty is to put a hedge round it and see that no animal eats up the plant, and there your duty ends. The plants grows of itself. So is it in regard to the spiritual growth of every man. None can teach you; none can make a spiritual man of you; you have to teach yourself; your growth must come from inside.

What can an external teacher do ? He can remove the obstructions a little, and there his duty ends. Therefore help, if you can; but do not destroy. Give up all ideas that *you* can make men spiritual. It is impossible. There is no other teacher to you than your own soul. Recognise this. What comes of it ? In society we see so many different natures. There are thousands and thousands of varieties of minds and inclinations. A thorough generalisation of them is impossible, but for our practical purpose it is sufficient to have them characterised into four classes. First, there is the active man, the worker; he wants to work, and there is tremendous energy in his muscles and his nerves. His aim is to work; to build hospitals, do charitable deeds, make streets, to plan and to organise. Then there is the emotional man, who loves the sublime and the beautiful to an excessive degree. He loves to

think of the beautiful, to enjoy the aesthetic side of nature, and adore Love and the God of Love. He loves with his whole heart the great souls of all times, the prophets of religions, and the Incarnations of God on earth; he does not care whether reason can or cannot prove that Christ or Buddha existed; he does not care for the exact date when the *Sermon on the Mount* was preached, or for the exact moment of Krishna's birth; what he cares for, is their personalities, their lovable figures. Such is his ideal. This is the nature of the lover, the emotional man. Then, there is the mystic, whose mind wants to analyse its own self, to understand the workings of the human mind, what the forces are that are working inside, and how to know, manipulate, and obtain control over them. This is the mystical mind. Then, there is the philosopher, who wants to weigh everything and use his intellect even beyond the possibilities of all human philosophy.

Now a religion, to satisfy the largest proportion of mankind, must be able to supply food for all these various types of minds; and where this capability is wanting, the existing sects all become one-sided. Suppose you go to a sect which preaches love and emotion. They sing and weep, and preach love. But as soon as you say, "My friend, that is all right, but I want something stronger than this, a little reason and philosophy, I want to understand things step by step and more rationally," "Get out," they say, and they not only ask you to get out but would send you to the other place, if they could. The result is, that sect can only help people of an emotional turn of mind; they not only do not help others, but try to destroy them, and the most wicked part of the whole thing is, that they will not only *not* help others, but do not believe in their sincerity. Again, there are philosophers, who talk of the wisdom of India and the East and use big psychological terms, fifty syllables long, but if an ordinary man like me goes to them and says, "Can you tell me anything to make me spiritual ?" the first thing they would do would be to smile and say, "Oh you are too far below us in your reason. What can you understand about spirituality ?" These are high-up philosophers. They simply show you the door. Then there are the mystical sects, who speak all sorts of things about different planes of existence, different states of mind, and what the power of the mind can do, and so on; and if you are an ordinary man and say, "Show me anything good that I can do; I am not much given to speculation;

can you give me anything that will suit me ?" they will smile, and say, "Listen to that fool; he knows nothing, his existence is for nothing." And this is going on everywhere in the world. I would like to get extreme exponents of all these different sects, and shut them up in a room, and photograph their beautiful derisive smiles !

That is the existing condition of religion, the existing condition of things. What I want to propagate is a religion that will be equally acceptable to all minds; it must be equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally mystic, and equally conducive to action. If professors from the colleges come, scientific men and physicists, they will court reason. Let them have it as much as they want. There will be a point beyond which they will think they cannot go, without breaking with reason. They will say, "These ideas of God and salvation are supersitious, give them up !" I say, "Mr. Philosopher, this body of yours is a bigger superstition. Give *it* up, don't go home to dinner or to your philosophic chair. Give up the body, and if you cannot, cry quarter and sit down." For religion must be able to show how to realise the philosophy that teaches us that this world is one, that there is but One Existence in the universe. Similarly, if the mystic comes, we must welcome him, be ready to give him the science of mental analysis, and practically demonstrate it before him. And if emotional people come, we must sit, laugh and weep with them in the name of the Lord; we must "drink the cup of love and become mad." If the energetic worker comes, we must work with him, with all the energy that we have. And this combination will be the ideal of the nearest approach to a universal religion. Would to God that all men were so constituted that in their minds *all* these elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion, and of work were equally present in full ! That is the ideal, my ideal of a perfect man. Everyone who has only one or two of these elements of character, I consider "one-sided"; and this world is almost full of such "one-sided" men, with knowledge of that one road only, in which they move; and anything else is dangerous and horrible to them. To become harmoniously balanced in all these four directions, is *my* ideal of religion. And this religion is attained by what we; in India, call *Yoga*—union. To the worker, it is union between men and the whole of humanity; to the mystic, between his lower and Higher Self; to the Lover, union between himself and

the God of love, and to the philosopher, it is the union of *all* existence. This is what is meant by *Yoga*. This is a Sanskrit term, and these four divisions of *Yoga* have, in Sanskrit, different names. The man who seeks after this kind of union is called a *Yogin*. The worker is called the *Karma-Yogin*. He who seeks the union through love is called the *Bhakti-Yogin*. He who seeks it through mysticism is called the *Raja-Yogin* And he who seeks it through philosophy is called the *Jnana-Yogin*. So this word *Yogin* comprises them all.

Now first of all let me take up *Raja-Yoga*. What is this *Raja-Yoga*, this controlling of the mind? In this country you are associating all sorts of hobgoblins with the word *Yoga*. I am afraid, therefore, I must start by telling you that it has nothing to do with such things. No one of these *Yogas* gives up reason, no one of them asks you to be hoodwinked, or to deliver your reason into the hands of priests of any type whatsoever. No one them asks that you should give your allegiance to any superhuman messenger. Each one of them tells you to *cling* to your reason, to hold fast to it. We find in all beings three sorts of instruments of knowledge The first is instinct, which you find most highly developed in animals; this is the lowest instrument of knowledge. What is the second instrument of knowledge? Reasoning. You find that most highly developed in man. Now in the first place, instinct is an inadequate instrument; to animals, the sphere of action is very limited, and within that limit, instinct acts. When you come to man, you see it is largely developed into reason. The sphere of action also has here become enlarged Yet even reason is still very insufficient. Reason can go only a little way and then it stops, it cannot go any further; and if you try to push it, the result is helpless confusion, reason itself becomes unreasonable. Logic becomes argument in a circle. Take for instance the very basis of our perception, matter and force. What is matter? That which is acted upon by force. And force? That which acts upon matter. You see the complication, what the logicians call see-saw, one idea depending on the other, and this again depending on that. You find a mighty barrier before reason, beyond which reasoning cannot go; yet it always feels impatient to get into the region of the Infinite beyond. This world, this universe which our senses feel, or our mind thinks, is but one atom, so to say, of the Infinite, projected on to the plane of consciousness; and within that narrow limit, defined by the network of consciousness, works

our reason, and not beyond. Therefore, there must be some other instrument to take us beyond, and that instrument is called inspiration. So instinct, reason, and inspiration are three instruments of knowledge. Instinct belongs to animals, reason to man, and inspiration to God-men. But in all human beings are to be found in a more or less developed condition, the germs of all these three instruments of knowledge. To have these mental instruments evolved, the germs must be there. And this must also be remembered, that one instrument is a development of the other, and therefore does not contradict it. It is reason that develops into inspiration, and therefore, inspiration does not contradict reason, but fulfils it. Things which reason cannot get at, are brought to light by inspiration; and they do not contradict reason. The old man does not contradict the child, but fulfils the child. Therefore, you must always bear in mind that the great danger lies in mistaking the lower form of instrument to be the higher. Many times instinct is presented before the world as inspiration, and then come all the spurious claims for the gift of prophecy. A fool or a semi-lunatic thinks that the confusion going on in his brain is inspiration, and he wants men to follow him. The most contradictory, irrational nonsence that has been preached in the world, is simply the instinctive jargon of confused lunatic brains trying to pass for the language of inspiration.

The first test of true teaching must be, that the teaching should *not contradict reason*. And you may see that such is the basis of all these *Yogas*. We take the *Raja-Yoga*, the psychological *Yoga*, the psychological way to union. It is a vast subject, and I can only point out to you now the central idea of this *Yoga*. We have but one method of acquiring knowledge. From the lowest man to the highest *Yogin*, all have to use the same method; and that method is what is called concentration. The chemist who works in his laboratory concentrates all the powers of his mind, brings them into one focus, and throws them on the elements, and the elements stand analysed, and thus his knowledge comes. The astronomer has also concentrated the powers of his mind, and brought them into one focus; and he throws them on to objects, through his telescope; and starts and systems roll forward, and give up their secrets to him. So it is in every case; with the professor in his chair, the student with his book, with every man who is working to know. You are hearing me, and if my words

interest you, your mind will become concentrated on them; and then suppose a clock strikes, you will not hear it, on account of this concentration; and the more you are able to concentrate your mind, the better you will understand me, and the more I concentrate my love and powers, the better I shall be able to give expression to what I want to convey to you The more this power of concentration, the more knowledge is acquired, because this is the one and only method of acquiring knowledge. Even the lowest shoeblack, if he gives more concentration will black shoes better; the cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of nature, and lets out floods of light. This, the power of concentration, is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge. The system of *Raja-Yoga* deals almost exclusively with this. In the present state of our body we are so much distracted, and the mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred sorts of things. As soon as I try to calm my thoughts, and concentrate my mind upon any one object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses rush into the brain, thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check it and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in *Raja-Yoga*.

Now take *Karma-Yoga*, the attainment of God through work. It is evident that in society there are many persons who seem to born for some sort of activity or other, whose minds cannot be concentrated on the plane of thought alone, and who have but one idea, concretised in work, visible and tangible There must be a science for this kind of life too. Each one of us is engaged in some work, but the majority of us fritter away the greater portion of our energies, because we do not know the secret of work. *Karma-Yoga* explains this secret and teaches where and how to work, how to employ to the greatest advantage, the largest part of our energies in the work that is before us. But with this secret we must take into consideration the great objection against work, namely, that is causes pain. All misery and pain come from attachment. I want to do work, I want to do good to a human being; and it is ninety to one that that human being whom I have helped will prove ungrateful, and go against me; and the result to me is pain. Such things deter mankind from working; and it

spoils a good portion of the work and energy of mankind, this fear of pain and misery. *Karma-Yoga* teaches us how to work for work's sake, unattached, without caring who is helped, and what for. The *Karma-Yogin* works because it is his nature, because he feels that it is good for him to do so, and he has no object beyond that. His position in this world is that of a giver, and he never cares to receive anything. He knows that he is giving, and does not ask for anything in return and therefore he eludes the grasp of misery. The grasp of pain, whenever it comes, is the result of the reaction of "attachment."

There is then the *Bhakti-Yoga* for the man of emotional nature, the lover. He wants to love God, he relies upon and uses all sorts of rituals, flowers, incense, beautiful buildings, forms, and all such things. Do you mean to say they are wrong ? One fact I must tell you. It is good for you to remember, in this country especially, that the world's great spiritual giants have all been produced only by those religious sects which have been in possession of very rich mythology and ritual. All sects that have attempted to worship God without any form or ceremony, have crushed without mercy everything that is beautiful and sublime in religion. Their religion is a fanaticism at best, a dry thing. The history of the world is a standing witness to this fact. Therefore, do not decry these rituals and mythologies. Let people have them; let those who so desire have them. Do not exhibit that unworthy derisive smile, and say, "They are fools; let them have it." Not so; the greatest men I have seen in my life, the most wonderfully developed in spirituality, have all come through the discipline of these rituals. I do not hold myself worthy to sit at their feet, and for me to criticise them ! How do I know how these ideas act upon the human mind, which of them I am to accept and which to reject ? We are apt to criticise everything in the world without sufficient warrant. Let people have all the mythology they want, with its beautiful inspirations; for you must always bear in mind that emotional natures do not care for abstract definitions of the truth. God to them is something tangible, the only thing that is real; they feel, hear and see Him and love Him. Let them have their God. Your rationalist seems to them to be like the fool who, when he saw a beautiful statue, wanted to break it to find out of what material it was made. *Bhakti-Yoga* teaches them how to love, without any ulterior motives, loving God and

loving the good because it is good to do so, not for going to heaven, nor to get children, wealth, or anything else. It teaches them that love itself is the highest recompense of love—that God Himself is love. It teaches them to pay all kinds of tribute to God as the Creator, the Omnipresent, Omniscient, Almighty Ruler, the Father and the Mother. The highest phrase that can express Him, the highest idea that the human mind can conceive of Him, is, that He is the God of Love. Wherever there is love, it is He "Wherever there is any love, it is He, the Lord is present there." Where the husband kisses the wife, He is there in the kiss; where the mother kisses the child, He is there in the kiss, where friends clasp hands, He, the Lord, is present as the God of Love. When a great man loves and wishes to help mankind. He is there giving freely His bounty out of His love to mankind. Wherever the heart expands. He is there manifested. This is what the *Bhakti-Yoga* teaches.

We lastly come to the *Jnana-Yogin*, the philosopher, the thinker, he who wants to go beyond the visible. He is the man who is not satisfied with the little things of this world. His idea is to go beyond the daily routine of eating, drinking and so on, not even the teaching of thousands of books will satisfy him. Not even all the sciences will satisfy him; at the best, they only bring this little world before him. What else will give him satisfaction ? Not even myriads of systems of worlds will satisfy him, they are to him but a drop in the ocean of existence. His soul wants to go beyond all that into the very heart of being, by seeing Reality as It is; by realising It, by being It, by becoming one with that Universal Being. That is the philosopher, to say that God is the Father or the Mother, the Creator of this universe, its Protector, and Guide, is to him quite inadequate to express Him. To Him, God is the life of his life, the soul of his soul. God is his own Self. Nothing else remains which is other than God. All the mortal parts of him become pounded by the weighty strokes of philosophy, and are brushed away. What at last truly remains is God Himself.

Upon the same tree there are two birds, one on the top, the other below. The one on the top is calm, silent and majestic, immersed in his own glory, the one on the lower branches, eating sweet and bitter fruits by turns, hoping from branch to branch, is becoming happy and miserable by turns. After a time the lower bird eats an exceptionally bitter fruit, and gets disgusted and looks

up and sees the other bird, that wondrous one of golden plumage, who eats neither sweet nor bitter fruit, who is neither happy nor miserable, but calm, Self-centred and sees nothing beyond his Self. The lower bird longs for this condition but soon forgets it, and again begins to eat the fruit. In a little while, he eats another exceptionally bitter fruit, which makes him feel miserable, and he again looks up, and tries to get nearer to the upper bird. Once more he forgets and after a time he looks up, and so on he goes again and again, until he comes very near to the beautiful bird and sees the reflection of light from his plumage playing around his own body, and he feels a change and seems to melt away; still nearer he comes, and everything about him melts away, and at last he understands this wonderful change. The lower bird was, as it were, only the substantial-looking shadow, the reflection of the higher; he himself was in essence the upper bird all the time. This eating of fruits, sweet and bitter, this lower, little bird, weeping and happy by turns, was a vain chimera, a dream, all along, the real bird was there above, calm and silent, glorious and majestic, beyond grief, beyond sorrow. The upper bird is God, the Lord of this universe; and the lower bird is the human soul, eating the sweet and bitter fruits of this world Now and then comes a heavy blow to the soul. For a time, he stops the eating and goes towards the unknown God, and a flood of light comes. He thinks that this world is a vain show. Yet again the senses drag him down, and he begins as before to eat the sweet and bitter fruits of the world. Again an exceptionally hard blow comes. His heart becomes open again to divine light; thus gradually he approaches God, and as he gets nearer and nearer, he finds his old self melting away. When he has come near enough he sees that he is no other than God, and he exclaims, "He whom I have described to you as the Life of this universe, as present in the atom, and in suns and moons, He is the basis of our own life, the Soul of our soul. Nay, thou art That." This is what this *Jnana-Yoga* teaches. It tells man that he is essentially divine. It shows to mankind the real unity of being, and that each one of us is the Lord God Himself, manifested on earth. All of us, from the lowest worm that crawls under our feet to the highest beings to whom we look up with wonder and awe, all are manifestations of the same Lord.

Lastly, it is imperative that all these various *Yogas* should be carried out in practice; mere theories about them will not do any

good First we have to hear about them, then we have to think about them We have to reason the thoughts out, impress them on our minds, and we have to mediate on them, realise them, until at last they become our whole life No longer will religion remain a bundle of ideas or theories, nor an intellectual assent, it will enter into our very self By means of intellectual assent we may today subscribe to many foolish things, and change our minds altogether tomorrow But true religion never changes Religion is realisation, not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging, but it is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes That is religion

18

THE WAY TO THE REALISATION OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

No search has been dearer to the human heart than that which brings to us light from God. No study has taken so much of human energy, whether in times past or present, as the study of the soul, of God and of human destiny. However immersed we are in our daily occupations, in our ambitions, in our work, in the midst of the greatest of our struggles, sometimes there will come a pause; the mind stops, and wants to know something beyond this world. Sometimes it catches glimpses of a realm beyond the senses, and a struggle to get at it is the result. Thus it has been throughout the ages, in all countries. Man has wanted to look beyond, wanted to expand himself; and all that we call progress, evolution, has been always measured by that one search, the search for human destiny, the search for God.

As our social struggles are represented, amongst different nations, by different social organisations, so is man's spiritual struggle represented by various religions; and as different social organisations are constantly quarrelling, are constantly at war with each other, of these spiritual organisations have been constantly at war with each other, constantly quarrelling. Men belonging to a particular social organisation claim that the right

*Speech delivered in the Universalist Church, Pasadena, California, 28th January, 1990.

to live only belongs to them, and so long as they can, they want to exercise that right at the cost of the week. We know that just now there is a fierce struggle of that sort going on in South Africa. Similarly each religious sect has claimed the exclusive right to live. And thus we find that though there is nothing that has brought to man more blessings than religion, yet at the same time, there is nothing that has brought more horror than religion. Nothing has made more for peace and love than religion, nothing has engendered fiercer hatred than religion. Nothing has made the brotherhood of man more tangible than religion; nothing has bred more bitter enmity between man and than religion. Nothing has built more charitable institutions, more hospitals for men, and even for animals, then religion; nothing has deluged the world with more blood than religion. We know, at the same time, that there has always been an under-current of thought; there have been always parties of men, philosophers, students of comparative religion, who have tried and are still trying to bring about harmony in the midst of all these, jarring and discordant sects. As regards certain countries, these attempts have succeeded, but as regards the whole world, they have failed.

There are some religions which have come down to us from the remotest antiquity, which are imbued with the idea that all sects should be allowed to live; that every sect has a meaning, a great idea, imbedded within itself, and therefore it is necessary for the good of the world and ought to be helped. In modern times, the same idea is prevailing and attempts are made from time to time to reduce it to practice. These attempts do not always come up to our expectations, up to the required efficiency. Nay, to our great disappointment, we sometimes find that we are quarrelling all the more.

Now, leaving aside dogmatic study, and taking a common-sense view of the thing, we find at the start, that there is a tremendous life-power in all the great religions of the world. Some may say that they are ignorant of this, but ignorance is no excuse. If a man says : "I do not know what is going on in the external world, therefore, things that are going on in the external world do not exist," that man is inexcusable. Now, those of you that watch the movement of religious thought all over the world, are perfectly aware that not one of the great religions of the world has died; not only so, each one of them is progressive. Christians

are multiplying, Mohammedans are multiplying, the Hindus are gaining ground; and the jews, also are increasing, and by their spreading all over the world and increasing rapidly, the fold of Judaism is constantly expanding.

Only one religion of the world—an ancient, great religion—has dwindled away, and that is the religion of Zoroastrianism, the religion of the ancient Persians. Under the Mohammedan conquest of Persia, about a hundred thousand of these people came and took shelter in India and some remained in ancient Persia. Those that were in Persia, under the constant persecution of the Mohammedans dwindled down, till there are at most only ten thousand; in India there are about eighty thousand of them, but they do not increase. Of course, there is an initial difficulty; they do not convert others to their religion. And then, this handful of persons living in India, with the pernicious custom of cousin marriage, do not multiply. With this single exception, all the great religions are living, spreading and increasing. We must remember that all the great religions of the world are very ancient; not one has been formed at the present time, and that every religion of the world owes its origin to the country between the Ganges and the Euphrates; not one great religion has arisen in Europe, not one in America, not one; every religion is of Asiatic origin and belongs to that part of the world. If what the modern scientists say is true, that the survival of the fittest is the test, these religions prove by their still living that they are yet fit for some people; there is a reason why they should live, they bring good to many. Look at the Mohammedans, how they are spreading in some places in Southern Asia, and spreading like fire in Africa. The Buddhists are spreading all over Central Asia, all the time. The Hindus, like the Jews, do not convert others, still gradually, other races are coming within Hinduism and adopting the manners and customs of the Hindus and falling into line with them. Christianity, you all know, is spreading;—though, I am not sure that the results are equal to the energy put forth. The Christians' attempt at propaganda has one tremendous defect—and that is the defect of all Western institutions; the machine consumes ninety per cent of the energy : there is too much machinery. Preaching has always been the business of the Asiatics. The Western people are grand in organisation, social institutions, armies, governments, etc.; but when it comes to preaching religion, they cannot come near

the Asiatic, whose business it has been all the time, and he knows it, and he does not use too much machinery.

This, then is a fact in the present history of the human race, that all these great religions exist and are spreading and multiplying. Now, there is a meaning, certainly, to this; and had it been the will of an All-wise and All-merciful Creator that one of these religions should exist and the rest should die, it would have become a fact long, long ago If it were a fact that only one of these religions is true and all the rest false, by this time it would have covered the whole ground. But this is not so; not one has gained all the ground. All religions sometimes advance—sometimes decline. Now, just think of this : in your own country there are more than sixty millions of people, and only twenty-one millions professing religions of all sorts. So it is not always progress. In every country, probably, if the statistics are taken, you would find that religions are sometimes progressing and sometimes going back. Sects are multiplying all the time. If the claims of a religion, that it has all the truth, and God has given it all this truth in a certain book, were true, why are there so many sects ? Fifty years do not pass before there are twenty sects founded upon the same book. If God has put all the truth in certain books. He does not give us those books in order that we may quarrel over texts That seems to be that fact. Why is it ? Even if a book were given by God which contained all the truth about religion, it would not serve the purpose because nobody could understand the book. Take the Bible, for instance, and all the sects that exist amongst Christians, each one puts its own interpretation upon the same text, and each says that it alone understands that text and all the rest are wrong. So with every religion. There are many sects among the Mohammedans and among the Buddhists, and hundreds among the Hindus. Now, bring these facts before you in order to show you that any attempt to bring all humanity to one method of thinking in spiritual things, has been a failure and always will be a failure. Every man that starts a theory, even at the present day, finds that if he goes twenty miles away from his followers, they will make twenty sects. You see that happening all the time. You cannot make all conform to the same ideas; that is a fact, and I thank God that it is so. I am not against any sect. I am glad that sects exist, and I only wish they may go on multiplying more and

more. Why ? Simply because of this : If you and I and all who are present here, were to think exactly the same thoughts, there would be no thoughts for us to think. We know that two or more forces must come into collision, in order to produce motion. It is the clash of thought, the differentiation of thought, that awakes thought. Now, if we all thought alike, we would be like Egyptian mummies in a museum looking vacantly at one another's faces;—no more than that ! Whirls and eddies occur only in a rushing, living stream. There are no whirlpools in stagnant, dead water. When religions are dead, there will be no more sects; it will be the perfect peace and harmony of the grave. But so long as mankind thinks, there will be sects. Variation is the sign of life, and it must be there. I pray that they may multiply so that at last there will be as many sects as human beings, and each one will have his own method, his individual method of thought in religion.

But this thing exists already. Each one of us is thinking in his own way, but this natural course has been obstructed all the time and is still being obstructed. If the sword is not used direclty other means will be used. Just hear what one of the best preachers in New York says : he preaches that the Philippinoes should be conquered because that is the only way to teach Christianity to them ! They are already Catholics; but he wants to make them Presbyterians, and for this, he is ready to lay all this terrible sin of bloodshed upon his race. How terrible ! And this man is one of the greatest preachers of this country, one of the best informed men. Think of the state of the world when a man like that is not ashamed to stand up and utter such arrant nonsense; and think of the state of the world when an audience cheers him ! Is this civilisation ? It is the old blood-thirstiness of the tiger, the cannibal, the savage, coming out once more under new names, new circumstances. What else can it be ? If the state of things is such now, think of the horrors through which the world passed in olden times, when every sect was trying by every means in its power, to tear to pieces the other sects. History shows that. The tiger in us is only asleep; it is not dead. When opportunities come it jumps up, and as of old, uses its claws and fangs. Apart from the sword, apart from material weapons there are weapons still more terrible; contempt, social hatred, and social ostracism,—now these are the most terrible of all inflictions that are hurled

against persons who do not think exactly in the same way as we do. And why should everybody think just as we do ? I do not see any reason If I am a rational man, I should be glad they do not think just as I do. I do not want to live in a grave-like land : I want to be a man, in a world of men. Thinking beings must differ; difference is the first sign of thought. If I am a thoughtful man, certainly I ought to like to live amongst thoughtful persons, where there are differences of opinion.

Then arises the question, how can all these varieties be true ? If one thing is true, its negation is false How can contradictory opinions be true at the same time ? This is the question which I intend to answer But I will first ask you : Are all the religions of the world really contradictory ? I do not mean the external forms in which great thoughts are clad. I do not mean the different buildings, languages, rituals, books, etc., employed in various religions, but I mean the internal soul of every religion. Every religion has a soul behind it, and that soul may differ from the soul of another religion; but are they contradictory ? Do they contradict or supplement each other ?—that is the question. I took up the question when I was quite a boy, and have been studying it all my life Thinking that my conclusion may be of some help to you, I place it before you. I belive that they are not contradictory, they are supplementary. Each religion, as it were takes up one part of the great universal truth, and spends its whole force in embodying and typifying that part of the great truth. It is therefore addition, not exclusion That is the idea. System after system arises, each one embodying a great idea, and ideals must be added to ideals. And this is the march of humanity. Man never progresses from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lesser truth to higher truth,—but it is never from error to truth. The child may develop more than the father, but was the father inane ? The child is the father plus something else. If your present state of knowledge is much greater than it was when you were a child, would you look down upon that stage now ? Will you look back and call it inanity ? Why, your present stage is the knowledge of the child plus something more.

Then, again : we also know that there may be almost contradictory points of view of the same thing, but they will all indicate the same thing. Suppose a man is journeying towards the sun and as he advances, he takes a photograph of the sun at

every stage. When he comes back, he has many photographs of the sun, which he places before us. We see that not two are alike, and yet, who will deny that all these are photographs of the same sun, from different standpoints? Take four photographs of this church from different corners; how different they would look, and yet they would all represent this church. In the same way, we are all looking at truth, from different standpoints which vary according to our birth, education, surroundings, and so on. We are viewing truth, getting as much of it as these circumstances will permit, colouring the truth with our own heart, understanding it with our own intellect, and grasping it with our own mind. We can only know as much of truth as is related to us, as much of it as we are able to receive. This makes the difference between man and man and occasions, sometimes, even contradictory ideas; yet, we all belong to the same great universal truth.

My idea, therefore, is that all these religions are different forces in the economy of God, working for the good of mankind; and that not one can become dead, not one can be killed. Just as you cannot kill any force in nature, so you cannot kill any one of these spiritual forces. You have seen that each religion is living. From time to time it may retrograde or go forward. At one time it may be shorn of a good many of its trappings; at another time it may be covered with all sorts of trappings; but all the same, the soul is ever there, it can never be lost. The ideal which every religion represents is never lost, and so every religion is intelligently on the march.

And that universal religion about which philosophers, and others, have dreamed in every country, already exists. It is here. As the universal brotherhood of man is already existing, so also is universal religion. Which of you that have travelled far and wide, have not found brothers and sisters in every nation? I have found them all over the world. Brotherhood already exists; only, there are number of persons who fail to see this, and only upset it by crying for new brotherhoods. Universal religion, too, is already existing. If the priests and other people that have taken upon themselves the task of preaching different religions, simply cease preaching for a few moments, we shall see, it is there. They are disturbing it all the time, because it is to their interest. You see that priests in every country are very conservative. Why is it so? There are very few priests who lead the people; most of

them are led by the people, and are their slaves and servants. If you say it is dry, they say it is so; if you say it is black, they say it is black. If the people advance, the priests must advance They cannot lag behind. So, before blaming the priests—it is the fashion to blame the priest—you ought to blame yourselves. You only get what you deserve. What would be the fate of a priest who wants to give you new and advanced ideas and lead you forward ? His children would probably starve and he would be clad in rags. He is governed by the same worldly laws that you are. "If you go on," he says, "let us march." Of course, there are exceptional souls, not cowed down by public opinion. They see the truth and truth alone they value. Truth has got hold of them, has got possession of them, as it were, and they cannot but march ahead They never look backward, and for them there are no people, God alone exists for them, He is the Light before them and they are following that Light.

I met a Mormon gentleman in this country, who tried to persuade me to his faith. I said, 'I have great respect for your opinions, but in certain points we do not agree. I belong to a monastic order, and you believe in marrying many wives. But why dont you go to India to preach ?" Then he was astonished; he said · "Why, you dont't believe in any marriage at all, and we believe in polygamy, and yet you ask me to go to your country !" I said, "Yes; my countrymen will hear every religious thought, wherever it my come from I wish you would go to India; first, because I am a great believer in sects. Secondly, there are many men in India who are not at all satisfied which any of the existing sects, and on account of this dissatisfaction, they will not have anything to do with religion, and, possibly, you might get some of them." The greater the number of sects, the more chance of people getting religion. In the hotel, where there are all sorts of food, everyone has a chance to get his appetite satisfied. So I want sects to multiply in every country, that more people may have a chance to be spiritual Do not think that people do not like religion. I do not believe that The preachers cannot give them what they need. The same man that may have been branded as an atheist, as a materialist, or what not, may meet a man who gives him the truth needed by him and he may turn out the most spiritual man in the community. We can eat only in our own way. For instance, we Hindus eat with our fingers. Our fingers are

supplier than yours, you cannot use your fingers the same way. Not only the food should be supplied, but it should be taken in your own particular way. Not only must you have the spiritual ideas, but they must come to you according to your own method. They must speak your own language, the language of your soul, and then alone they will satisfy you. When the man comes who speaks my language and gives truth in my language, I at once understand it and receive it for ever. This is a great fact.

Now, from this we see that there are various grades and types of human minds and what a task religions take upon them! A man brings forth two or three doctrines and claims that his religion ought to satisfy all humanity. He goes out into the world, God's menagerie, with a little cage in hand, and says: "God and the elephant and everybody has to go into this. Even if we have to cut the elephant into pieces, he must go in." Again, there may be a sect with a few good ideas. They say: "All men must come in!" "But there is no room for them." "Never mind! Cut them to pieces; get them in, anyhow; if they don't get in, why, they will be demand." No preacher, no sect have I ever met that pauses and asks: "Why is it people do not listen to us?" Instead, they curse the people and say, "The people are wicked." They never ask: "How is it people do not listen to my words? Why cannot I make them see the truth? Why cannot I speak in their language? Why cannot I open their eyes?" Surely, they ought to know better, and when they find people do not listen to them, if they curse anybody it should be themselves. But it is always the people's fault! They never try to make their sect large enough to embrace every one.

Therefore, we at once see why there has been so much narrow-mindedness, the part always claiming to be the whole; the little, finite unit always laying claim to the infinite. Think of little sects, born within a few hundred years, out of fallible human brains, making this arrogant claim of knowing the whole of God's infinite truth! Think of the arrogance of it! If it shows anything, it is this, how vain human beings are. And it is no wonder that such claims have always failed, and, by the mercy of the Lord, are always destined to fail. In this line the Mohammedans were the best off: every step forward was made with the sword—the Koran in the one hand and the sword in the other: "Take the Koran, or you must die; there is no alternative!" You know from history how

phenomenal was their success, for six hundred years nothing could resist them, and then there came a time when they had to cry halt. So will it be with other religions if they follow the same methods. We are such babes ! We always forget human nature. When we begin life we think that our fate will be something extraordinary, and nothing can make us disbelieve that. But when we grow old, we think differently. So with religions. In their early stages, when they spread a little, they get the idea that they can change the minds of the whole human race in a few years, and go on killing and massacring to make converts by force; then they fail, and begin to understand better. We see that these sects did not succeed in what they started out to do, which was a great blessing. Just think if one of those fanatical sects had succeeded all over the world, where would man be today ? Now, the Lord be blessed that they did not succeed ! Yet, each one represents a great truth; each religion represents a particular excellence,—something which is its soul. There is an old story which comes to my mind : There were some ogresses who used to kill people and do all sorts of mischief; but they, themselves, could not be killed, until someone found out that their souls were in certain birds, and so long as the birds were safe nothing could destroy the ogresses. So, each one of us has, as it were, such a bird, where our soul is; has an ideal, a mission to perform in life. Every human being is an embodiment of such an ideal, such a mission. Whatever else you may lose, so long as that ideal is not lost, and that mission is not hurt, nothing can kill you. Wealth may come and go, misfortune may pile mountains high, but if you have kept the ideal entire, nothing can kill you. You may have grown old, even a hundred years old, but if that mission is fresh and young in your heart, what can kill you ? But when that ideal is lost and that mission is hurt, nothing can save you. All the wealth, all the power of the world will not save you. And what are nations but multiplied individuals ? So, each nation has a mission of its own to perform in this harmony of races, and so long as that nation keeps to that ideal, that nation nothing can kill, but if that nation gives up its mission in life and goes after something else, its life becomes short, and it vanishes.

And so with religions. The fact that all these old religions are living today, proves that they must have kept that mission intact; inspite of all their mistakes, inspite of all difficulties, inspite of

all quarrels, inspite of all the incrustation of forms and figures, the heart of everyone of them is sound—it is a throbbing, beating, living heart. They have not lost, any one of them, the great mission they come for. And it is splendid to study that mission. Take Mohammedanism, for instance. Christian people hate no religion in the world so much as Mohammedanism. They think it is the very worst form of religion that ever existed. As soon as a man becomes a Mohammedan, the whole of Islam receives him as a brother with open arms, without making any distinction, which no other religion does. If one of your American Indians becomes a Mohammedan, the Sultan of Turkey would have no objection to dine with him. If he has brains, no position is barred to him. In this country, I have never yet seen a church where the white man and the negro can kneel side by side to pray. Just think of that : Islam makes its followers all equal,—so, that you see is the peculiar excellence of Mohammedanism. In many places in the Koran you find very sensual ideas of life. Never mind. What Mohammedanism comes to preach to the world is this practical brotherhood of all belonging to their faith. That is the essential part of the Mohammedan religion; and all the other ideas about heaven, and of life etc., are not Mohammedanism. They are accretions.

With the Hindus you will find one national idea,—spirituality. In no other religion, in no other sacred books of the world, will you find so much energy spent in defining the idea of God. They tried to define the idea of soul so that no earthly touch might mar it. The spirit must be divine; and spirit understood as spirit must not be made into a man. The same idea of unity, of the realisation of God, the omnipresent, is preached throughout. They think it is all nonsense to say that He lives in heaven : and all that. It is a mere human, anthropomorphic idea. All the heaven that ever existed is now and here. One moment in infinite time is quite as good as any other moment. If you believe in a God, you can see Him even now. We think religion begins when you have realised something. It is not believing in doctrines, nor giving intellectual assent, nor making declarations. If there is a God, have you seen Him ? If you say "no," then what right have you to believe in Him ? If you are in doubt whether there is a God, why do you not struggle to see Him ? Why do you not renounce the world and spend the whole of your life for this one object ? Renunciation

and spirituality are two great ideas of India, and it is because India clings to these ideas that all her mistakes count for so little.

With the Christians, the central idea that has been preached by them is the same : "Watch and pray, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,"—which means purify your minds and be ready ! And that spirit never dies. You recollect that the Christians are, even in the darkest days, even in the most superstitious Christian countries, always trying to prepare themselves for the coming of the Lord, by trying to help others, building hospitals, and so on So long as the Christians keep to that ideal, their religion lives.

Now, an ideal presents itself to my mind. It may be only a dream. I do not know whether it will ever be realised in this world, but sometimes it is better to dream a dream, than die on hard facts. Great truths, even in a dream, are good, better than bad facts. So, let us dream a dream :—

You know that there are various grades of mind. You may be a matter-of-fact, common-sense rationalist : you do not care for forms and ceremonies, you want intellectual, hard, ringing facts and they alone will satisfy you. Then there are the Puritans, the Mohammedans, who will not allow a picture, or a statue in their place of worship. Very well ! But there is another man who is more artistic. He wants a great deal of art,—beauty of lines and curves, the colours, flowers, forms; he wants candles, lights, and all the insignia and paraphernalia of ritual, that he may see God. His mind takes God in those forms, as yours takes Him through the intellect. Then, there is the devotional man, whose soul is crying for God he has no other idea but to worship God, and to praise Him. Then again, there is the philosopher, standing outside all these, mocking at them. He thinks, "What nonsense they are ! What ideas about God !"

They may laugh at each other, but each one has a place in this world. All these various minds, all these various types are necessary If there ever is going to be an ideal religion, it must be broad and large enough to supply food for all these minds. It must supply the strength of philosophy to the philosopher, the devotee's heart to the worshipper; to the ritualist, it will give all that the most marvellous symbolism can convey; to the poet, it will give as much of heart as he can take in, and other things besides. To make such a broad religion, we shall have to go back

to the time when religions began and take them all in

Our watchword, then, will be acceptance, and not exclusion. Not only toleration, for so-called toleration is often blasphemy, and I do not believe in it I believe in acceptance Why should I tolerate ? Toleration means that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live It is not a blasphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live ! I accept all religions that were in the past, and worship with them all; I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form the worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan : I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix, I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his law I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of every one.

Not only shall I do all these but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished ? Or is it still a continuous revelation, going on ? It is a marvellous book,—these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran and all other scared books, are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave it open for all of them. We stand in the present, but open ourselves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present, and to all that are to come in the future !

19

THE REAL AND THE APPARENT MAN

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Here we stand, and our eyes look forward sometimes miles ahead Man has been doing that since he began to think. He is always looking forward, looking ahead He wants to know where he goes, even after the dissolution of his body Various theories have been propounded, system after system has been brought forward, to suggest explanations Some have been rejected, and others are accepted, and thus they will go on, so long as man is here, so long as man thinks There is some truth in each of these systems There is a good deal of what is not truth in all of them I shall try to place before you the sum and substance, the result, of the enquiries in this line that have been made in India I shall try to harmonise the various thoughts on the subjects, as they have come up from time to time among Indian philosophers I shall try to harmonise the psychologists and the metaphysicians, and, if possible, I shall harmonise them with modern scientific thinkers also

The one theme of the *Vedanta* philosophy is the search after unity The Hindu mind does not care for the particular; it is always after the general, nay, the universal. "What is that, by knowing which everything else is to be known ?" That is the one theme "As through the knowledge of one lump of clay all that is of clay is known, so, what is that, by knowing which, this whole universe itself will be known ?" That is the one search The whole of this universe, according to the Hindu philosophers,

can be resolved into one material, which they call *akasa.* Everything that we see around us, feel, touch, taste, is simply a differentiated manifestation of this *akasa.* It is all-pevading, fine; all that we call solids, liquids, or gases, figures, forms, or bodies, the earth, sun, moon and stars—everything is composed of this *akasa.*

What force is it which acts upon this *akasa* and manufactures this universe out of it ? Along with *akasa* exists universal power; all that is power in the universe, manifesting as force, or attraction—nay, even as thought--is but a different manifestation of that one power which the Hindus call *prana.* This *prana,* acting on *akasa,* is creating the whole of this universe. In the beginning of a cycle, this *prana,* as it were, sleeps in the infinite ocean of *akasa.* It existed motionless in the beginning. Then arises motion in this ocean of *akasa,* by the action of this *prana* and as this *prana* begins to move, to vibrate, out of this occean come the various celestial systems, suns, moons, stars, earth, human beings, animals, plants, and the manifestations of all the various forces and phenomena. Every manifestation of power, therefore, according to them, is this *prana.* Every material manifestation is *akasa.* When this cycle will end, all that we call solid will melt away into the next form, the next finer or the liquid form; that will melt into the gaseous, and that into finer and more uniform heat vibrations, and all will melt back into the original *akasa,* and what we now call attraction, repulsion, and motion, will slowly resolve into the original *prana.* Then this *prana* is said to sleep for a period, again to emerge and to throw out all these forms; and when this period will end, the whole thing will subside again. Thus, this process of creation is going down, and coming up, oscillating backwards and forwards; in the language of modern science, it is becoming static during one period, and during another period it is becoming dynamic. At one time it becomes potential, and at the next period it becomes active. This alteration has gone on through eternity.

Yet, this analysis is only partial. This much has been known even to modern physical science. Beyond that, the research of physical science cannot reach. But the inquiry does not stop in consequence. We have not yet found that one, by knowing which everything else will be known. We have resolved the whole universe into two components, into what are called matter and

energy, or what the ancient philospher of India called *akasa* and *prana*. The next step is to resolve this *akasa* and the *prana* into their origin. Both can be resolved into the still higher entity which is called mind It is out of mind, the "*Mahat*," the universally existing thought-power, that these two have been produced. Thought is a still finer manifestation of being than either *akasa* or *prana* It is thought that splits itself into these two. The universal thought existed in the beginning, and that manifested, changed, evolved itself into these two, *akasa* and *prana*; and by the combination of these two the whole universe has been produced.

We next come to psychology. I am looking at you The external sensations are brought to me by the eyes; they are carried by the sensory nerves to the brain. The eyes are not the organs of vision, they are but the external instruments, because if the real organ behind, that which carries the sensation to the brain, is destroyed, I may have twenty eyes, yet I cannot see you. The picture on the retina may be as complete, as possible yet I shall not see you Therefore, the organ is different from its instruments; behind the instruments, the eyes, there must be the organ. So it is with all sensations, the nose is not the sense of smell, it is but the instrument, and behind it is the organ. With every sense we have, there is first the external instrument in the physical body, behind that, in the same physical body, there is the organ; yet, these are not sufficient. Suppose I am talking to you, and you are listening to me with close attention. Something happens, say, a bell rings; you will not, perhaps, hear the bell ring. The pulsations of that sound came to your ear, struck the tympanum, impression was carried by the nerve into the brain; if the whole process was complete up to carrying the impulse to the brain, why did you not hear ? Something else was wanting; the mind was not attached to the organ. When the mind detaches itself from the organ, the organ may bring any news to it, but the mind will not receive it. When it attaches itself to the organ, then alone is it possible for the mind to receive the news. Yet, even that does not complete the whole. The instruments may bring the sensation from outside, the organs may carry it inside, the mind may attach itself to the organ, and yet the perception may not be complete. One more factor is necessary; there must be a reaction within. With this reaction comes knowledge. That which is outside sends, as it

were, the current of news into my brain. My mind takes it up, and presents it to the intellect, which groups it in relation to pre-received impressions, and sends a current of reaction, and with that reaction comes perception. Here, then, is the will. The state of mind which reacts is called "*Buddhi*", the intellect. Yet, even this does not complete the whole. One step more is required. Suppose here is a camera and there is a sheet of cloth, and I try to throw a picture on that sheet. What am I to do? I am to guide various rays of light through the camera to fall upon the sheet and become grouped there. Something is necessary to have the picture thrown upon, which does not move. I cannot form a picture upon something which is moving; that something must be stationary, because the rays of light which I throw on it are moving, and these moving rays of light, must be gathered, unified, co-ordinated, and completed, upon something which is stationary. Similar is the case with the sensations which these organs of ours are carrying inside and presenting to the mind, and which the mind in its turn is presenting to the intellect. This process will not be complete unless there is something permanent in the background upon which the picture, as it were, may be formed, upon which we may unify all the different impressions. What is it that gives unity to the changing whole of our being? What is it that keeps up the identity of the moving thing moment after moment? What is it upon which all our different impressions are pieced together, upon which the perceptions, as it were, come together, reside, and form a united whole? We have found that to serve this end there must be something, and we also see that something must be, relatively to the body and mind, motionless. The sheet of cloth upon which the camera throws the picture is, relatively to the rays of light, motionless; else there will be no picture. That is to say, the perceiver must be an individual. This something upon which the mind is painting all these pictures, this something upon which our sensations, carried by the mind and intellect, are placed and grouped and formed into a unity, is what is called the soul of man.

We have seen that it is the universal cosmic mind that splits itself into the *akasa* and *prana*, and beyond mind we have found the soul in us. In the universe, behind the universal mind, there is a Soul that exists, and it is called God. In the individual it is the soul of man. In this universe, in the cosmos, just as the

universal mind becomes evolved into *akasa* and *prana*, even so, we may find that the Universal Soul Itself becomes evolved as mind. Is it really so with the individual man? Is his mind the creator of his body, and his soul the creator of his mind? That is to say, are his body, his mind and his soul three different existences, or are they three in one, or again are they different states of existence of the same unit being? We shall gradually try to find an answer to this question. The first step that we have now gained is this :—here is this external body; behind this external body are the organs, the mind, the intellect and behind this is the soul. At the first step, we have found, as it were, that the soul is separate from the body, separate from the mind itself. Opinions in the religious world have been divided on this point, and the departure is this. All those religious views which generally pass under the name of dualism, hold that this soul is qualified, that it is of various qualities; that all feelings of enjoyment, pleasure and pain really belong to the soul. The non-dualists deny that the soul has any such qualities; they say it is unqualified.

Let us first take up the dualists, and try to present to you their position with regard to the soul and its destiny; next, the system that contradicts them; and lastly, let us try to find the harmony which non-dualism will bring to us. This soul of man, because it is separate from the mind and body, because it is not composed of *akasa* and *prana*, must be immortal. Why? What do we mean by mortality? Decomposition; and that is only possible for things that are the result of composition; anything that is made of two or three ingredients must become decomposed; that alone which is not the result of composition can never become decomposed, and therefore, can never die. It is immortal. It has been existing throughout eternity; it is uncreate. Every item of creation is simply a composition; no one ever saw creation come out of nothing. All that we know of creation is the combination of already existing things into newer forms. That being so, this soul of man, being simple, must have been existing for ever, and it will exist for ever. When this body falls off, the soul lives on. According to the *Vedantists*, when this body dissolves, the vital forces of the man go back to his mind and the mind becomes dissolved, as it were, into the *prana*, and that *prana* enters into the soul of man, and the soul of man comes out, clothed, as it were, with what they call the fine body, the mental

body, or spiritual body, as you may like to call it. In this body are the *Samskaras* of the man. What are the *Samskaras*? This mind is like a lake, and every thought is like a wave upon that lake. Just as in the lake waves rise, and then fall down and disappear, so these thought-waves are continually rising in the mind-stuff, and then disappearing, but they do not disappear for ever. They become finer and finer, but they are all there, ready to start up at another time, when called upon to do so Memory is simply calling back into wave-form some of those thoughts which have gone into that finer state of existence. Thus, everything that we have thought, every action that we have done, is lodged in the mind; it is all there in fine form, and when a man dies, the sum-total of these impressions is in the mind, which again works upon a little fine material as a medium. The soul, clothed, as it were, with these impressions and the fine body, passes out, and the destiny of the soul is guided by the resultant of all the different forces represented by the different impressions. According to us there are three different goals for the soul

Those that are very spiritual, when they die, follow the solar rays, and reach what they call the solar sphere, through that they reach what they call the lunar sphere, and through that they reach what they call the sphere of lightning, and there they meet with another soul who is already blessed, and he guides the new-comer forward to the highest of all spheres, which is called the *Brahmaloka*, the sphere of Brahma. There these souls attain to omniscience and omnipotence, become almost as powerful and all-knowing as God Himself, and they reside there for ever, according to the dualists, or, according to the non-dualists, they become one with the Universal at the end of the cycle The next class of persons, who have been doing good work with selfish motives, are carried by the results of their good works, when they die, to what they call the lunar sphere, where there are various heavens, and there they acquire fine bodies, the bodies of gods. They become goods and live there, and enjoy the blessing of heaven for a long period; and after that period is finished, the old *Karma* is again upon them and so they fall back again to the earth; they come down through the spheres of air and clouds, and all these various regions, and, at last, reach the earth through rain-drops. There on the earth they attach themselves to some cereal which is eventually eaten by some man who is fit to supply

them with material to make a new body. The last class, namely, the wicked, when they die, become ghosts or demons, and live somewhere midway between the lunar sphere and this earth. Some try to disturb mankind, some are friendly; and after living there for some time they also fall back to the earth and become animals. After living for some time in an animal body they get released, and come back, and become men again, and thus get one more chance to work out their salvation. We see, then, that those who have nearly attained to perfection, in whom only very little of impurity remains, go to the *Brahmaloka* through the rays of the sun; those who were a middling sort of people, who did some good work here with the idea of going to heaven, go to the heavens in the lunar sphere and there obtain god-bodies; but they have again to become men, and so have one more chance to become perfect. Those that are very wicked become ghosts and demons, and then they may have to become animals, after that they become men again and get another chance to perfect themselves. This earth is called the *Karma-Bhumi*, the sphere of *Karma* Here alone man makes his good or bad *Karma* When a man wants to go to heaven, and does good works for that purpose, he becomes a god, and does not as such store up any bad *Karma* , he just enjoys the effects of the good work he did on earth, and when this good *Karma* is exhausted, there comes upon him the resultant force of all the evil *Karma* he had previously stored up in life, and that brings him down again to this earth. In the same way, those that become ghosts remain in that state, not giving rise to fresh *Karma*, but suffer the evil results of their past misdeeds, and later on remain for a time in an animal body without causing any fresh *Karma*. When that period is finished, they too become men again. The states of reward and punishment due to good and bad *Karmas* are devoid of the force of generating fresh *Karmas*; they have only to be enjoyed or suffered. If there is an extraordinarily good or an extraordinarily evil *Karma*, it bears fruit very quickly. For instance, if a man has been doing many evil things all his his life, but does one good act, the result of that good act will immediately appear, but when that result has been gone through, all the evil acts must produce their results also. All men who do certain good and great acts, but the general tenor of whose lives has not been correct, will become gods, and after living for some time in god-bodies, enjoying the

powers of gods, they will have again to become men; when the power of the good acts is thus finished, the old evil comes up to be worked out Those who extraordinarily evil acts have to put on ghost and devil bodies, and when the effect of those evil actions is exhausted, the little good action which remains associated with them, makes them again become men. The way to *Brahmaloka*, from which there is no more fall or return, is called the *Devayana*, i.e., the way to God; the way to heaven is known as *Pitriyana*, i.e, the way to the fathers.

Man, therefore, according to the *Vedanta* philosophy, is the greatest being that is in the universe, and this world of work the best place in it, because only herein is the greatest and the best chance for him to become perfect. Angels or gods, whatever you may call them, have all to become men, if they want to become perfect. This is the great centre, the wonderful poise, and the wonderful opportunity—this human life

We come next to the other aspect of philosophy. There are Buddhists who deny the whole theory of the soul that I have just now been propounding. "What use is there," says the Buddhist, "to assume something as the substratum, as the background of this body and mind ? Why may we not allow thoughts to run on ? Why admit a third substance beyond this organism, composed of mind and body, a third substance called the soul ? What is its use ? Is not this organism sufficient to explain itself ? Why take anew a third something ?" These arguments are very powerful. This reasoning is very strong. So far as outside research goes, we see that this organism is a sufficient explanation of itself; at least, many of us see it in that light. Why, then, need there be a soul as substratum, as a something which is neither mind nor body but stands as a background for both mind and body ? Let there be only mind and body. Body is the name of a stream of matter continously changing Mind is the name of a stream of consciousness or thought continuously changing. What produces the apparent unity between these two ? This unity does not really exist, let us say. Take, for instance, a lighted torch, and whirl it rapidly before you. You see a circle of fire. The circle does not really exist, but because the torch is continually moving, it leaves the appearance of a circle. So there is no unity in this life; it is a mass of matter continually rushing down, and the whole of this matter you may call one unity, but no more. So is

mind; each thought is separate from every other thought; it is only the rushing current that leaves behind the illusion of unity; there is no need of a third substance. This universal phenomenon of body and mind is all that really is; do not posit something behind it. You will find that this Buddhist thought has been taken up by certain sects and schools in modern times, and all of them claim that it is new—their own invention. This has been the central idea of most of the Buddhistic philosophies, that this world is itself all-sufficient; that you need not ask for any background at all, all that is, is this sense-universe; what is the use of thinking of something as a support to this universe? Everything is the aggregate of qualities; why should there be a hypothetical substance in which they should inhere? The idea of substance comes from the rapid interchange of qualities, not from something unchangeable which exists behind them. We see how wonderful some of these arguments are; and they appeal easily to the ordinary experience of humanity; in fact, not one in a million can think of anything other than phenomena. To the vast majority of men nature appears to be only a changing, whirling, combining, mingling, mass of change. Few of us ever have a glimpse of the calm sea behind. For us it is always lashed into waves; this universe appears to us only as a tossing mass of waves Thus we find these two opinions One is, that there is something behind both body and mind, which is an unchangeable and immovable substance; and the other is, that there is no such thing as immovability or unchangeability in the universe, it is all change and nothing but change. The solution of this difference comes in the next step of thought, namely, the non-dualistic.

It says that the dualists are right in finding something behind all as a background which does not change; we cannot conceive change without there being something unchangeable. We can only conceive of anything that is changeable, by knowing something which is less changeable, and this also must appear more changeable in comparison with something else which is less changeable, and so on and on, until we are bound to admit that there must be something which never changes at all. The whole of this manifestation must have been in a state of non-manifestation, calm and silent, being the balance of opposing forces, so to say, when no force operated, because force acts when a disturbance of the equilibrium comes in. This universe is ever

hurrying on to return to that state of equilibrium again. If we are certain of any fact whatsoever, we are certain of this. When the dualists claim that there is a something which does not change, they are perfectly right, but their analysis that it is an underlying something which is neither the body nor the mind, a something separate from both, is wrong. So far as the Buddhists say that the whole universe is a mass of change, they are perfectly right; for, so long as I am separate from the universe, so long as I stand back and look at something before me, so long as there are two things—the looker-on and the thing looked upon—it will appear always that the universe is one of change, continuously changing all the time. But the reality is that there is both change and changelessness in this universe. It is not that the soul and the mind and the body are three separate existences, for this organism made of these three is really one. It is the same thing which appears as the body, as the mind, and as the thing beyond mind and body, but it is not at the same time all these He who sees the body does not see the mind even, he who sees the mind does not see that which he calls the soul, and he who sees the soul—for him the body and mind have vanished. He who sees only motion never sees absolute calm, and he who sees absolute calm—for him motion has vanished. A rope is taken for a snake. He who sees the rope as the snake, for him the rope has vanished, and when the delusion ceases and he looks at the rope, the snake has vanished.

There is then but one all-comprehending existence, and that one appears as manifold. This Self, or Soul, or Substance, is all that exists in the universe That Self, or Substance, or Soul, is, in the language of non-dualism, the *Brahman*, appearing to be manifold by the interposition of name and form. Look at the waves in the sea. Not one wave is really different from the sea, but what makes the wave apparently different ? Name and form; the form of the wave, and the name which we give to it, "wave." That is what makes it different from the sea. When name and form go, it is the same sea. Who can make any real difference between the wave and the see ? So this whole universe is that One Unit Existence; name and form have created all these various differences. As when the sun shines upon millions of globules of water, upon each particle is seen a most perfect representation of the sun, so the one Soul, the one Self, the One Existence of the

universe, being reflected on all these numerous globules of varying names and forms, appears to be various. But it is in reality only one. There is no "I" nor "you", it is all One. It is either all "I" or all 'you." This idea of duality, of two, is entirely false, and the whole universe, as we ordinarily know it, is the result of this false knowledge. When discrimination comes, and man finds there are not two but One, he finds that he is himself this universe. "It is I who am this universe as it now exists, a continuous mass of change. It is I who am beyond all changes, beyond all qualities, the eternally perfect, the eternally blessed."

There is, therefore, but one *Atman*, one Self, eternally pure, eternally perfect, unchangeable, unchanged; it has never changed; and all these various changes in the universe are but appearances in that one Self.

Upon it name and form have painted all these dreams; it is the form that makes the wave different from the sea. Suppose the wave subsides, will the form remain ? No; it will vanish. The existence of the wave was entirely dependent upon the existence of the sea, but the existence of the sea was not at all dependent upon the existence of the wave. The form remains so long as the wave remains, but as soon as the wave leaves it, it vanishes, it cannot ramain. This name and form is the outcome of what is called *Maya*. It is this *Maya* that is making individuals, making one appear different from another. Yet it has no existence *Maya* cannot be said to exist. Form cannot be said to exist, because it depends upon the existence of another thing. It cannot be said not to exist, seeing that it makes all this difference. According to the *Advaita* philosophy, then, this *Maya* or ignorance—or name and form, or as it has been called in Europe, "time, space and causality,"—is, out of this One Infinite Existence, showing us the manifoldness of the universe, in substance, this universe is One. So long as any one thinks that there are two ultimate realities, he is mistaken When he has come to know that there is but One, he is right. This is what is being proved to us every day, on the physical plane, on the mental plane, and also on the spiritual plane. Today it has been demonstrated that you and I, the sun, the moon and the stars, are but the different names of different spots in the same ocean of matter, and that this matter is continuously changing in its configuration. The particle of energy that was in the sun several months ago may be in the human

being now; tomorrow it may be in an animal, the day after to-morrow it may be in a plant; it is ever coming and going. It is all one urbroken, infinite mass of matter, only differentiated by name and forms. One point is called the sun; another, the moon; another, the stars; another, man; another, animal; another, plant; and so on. And all these names are fictitious; they have no reality because the whole is a continuously changing mass of matter. This very same universe, from another standpoint, is an ocean of thought, where each one of us is a point called a particular mind. Your are a mind, I am a mind, every one is a mind; and the very same universe viewed from the standpoint of knowledge, when the eyes have been cleared of delusions, when the mind has become pure, appears to be the Unbroken, Absolute Being, the ever pure, the unchangeable, the immortal.

What then becomes of all this three-fold eschatology of the Dualist, that when a man dies he goes to heaven, or goes to this or that sphere, and that the wicked persons becomes ghosts, and become animals, and so forth ? None comes and none goes, says the non-dualist. How can you come and go ? You are infinite; where is the place for you to go ? In a certain school a number of little children were being examined. The examiner had foolishly put all sorts of difficult questions to the little children. Among others there was this question. "Why does not the earth fall ?" His intention was to bring out the idea of gravitation or some other intricate scientific truth from these children. Most of them could not even understand the question, and so they gave all sorts of wrong answers. But one bright little girl answered it with another question—"Where shall it fall ?" The very question of the examiner was nonsense on the face of it; there is no up and down in the universe; the idea is only relative. So it is with regard to the soul; the very question of birth and death in regard to it is utter nonsense. Who goes and who comes ? Where are you not ? Where is the heaven that you are not in already ? Omnipresent is the Self of man. Where is it to go ? Where is it not go ? It is everywhere. So all this childish dream, and puerile illusion of birth and death, of heavens and higher heavens and lower worlds, all vanish immediately for the perfect; for the nearly perfect it vanishes after showing them the severel scenes up to *Brahmaloka*. It continues for the ignorant.

How is it that the whole world believes in going to heaven,

and in dying and being born? I am studying a book, page after page is being read and turned over. Another page comes and is turned over. Who changes? Who comes and goes? Not I, but the book. This whole nature is a book before the soul, chapter after chapter is being read and turned over, and every now and then a scene opens. That is read and turned over. A fresh one comes, but the soul is ever the same—eternal. It is nature that is changing, not the soul of man. This never changes. Birth and death are in nature, not in you. Yet the ignorant are deluded, just as we under delusion think that the sun is moving, and not the earth, in exactly the same way we think that we are dying, and not nature. These are all, therefore, hallucinations; just as it is an hallucination when we think that the fields are moving and not the railway train, exactly in the same manner is the hallucination of birth and death. When men are in a certain frame of mind, they see this very existence as the earth, as the sun, the moon, the stars; and all those who are in the same state of mind see the same things. Between you and me there may be millions of beings on different planes of existence. They will never see us, nor we them; we only see those who are in the same state of mind and on the same plane with us. Those musical instruments respond which have the same attunement of vibration, as it were; if the state of vibration, which they call "man-vibration," should be changed, no longer would men be seen here; the whole "man-universe," would vanish, and instead of that, other scenery would come before us, perhaps gods and the god-universe, or perhaps, for the wicked man, devils and the diabolic world; but all would be only different views of the one universe. It is this universe which, from the human plane, is seen as the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, and all such things,—it is this very universe which, seen from the plane of wickedness, appearse as a place of punishment. And this very universe is seen as heaven by those who want to see it as heaven. Those who have been dreaming of going to a God who is sitting on a throne, and of standing there praising Him all their lives, when they die, will simply see a vision of what they have in their minds; this very universe will simply change into a vast heaven, with all sorts of winged beings flying about, and a God sitting on a throne. These heavens are all of man's own making. So what the dualist says is true, says the *Advaitin*, but it is all simply of his own

making. These spheres and devils and gods and reincarnations and transmigrations are all mythology; so also is this human life. The great mistake that men always make is to think that this life alone is true; they understand it well enough when other things are called mythologies, but are never willing to admit the same of their own position. The whole thing as is appears is mere mythology, and the greatest of all lies is that we are bodies which we never were nor ever can be. It is the greatest of all lies that we are mere men, we are the God of the universe. In worshipping God we have been always worshipping our own hidden Self. The worst lie that you ever tell yourself is, that you were born a sinner or a wicked man. He alone is a sinner who sees a sinner in another man. Suppose there is a baby here, and you place a bag of gold on the table. Suppose a robber comes and takes the gold away. To the baby it is all the same; because there is no robber inside, there is no robber outside. To sinners and vile men, there is vileness outside, but not to good men. So the wicked see this universe as a hell, and the partially good see it is as heaven, and the perfect beings realise it as God Himself. Then alone the veil falls from the eyes, and the man, purified and cleansed, finds his whole vision changed. The bad dreams that have been torturing him for millions of years, all vanish, and he who was thinking of himself either as a man, or a god, or a demon he who was thinking of himself as living in low places, in high places, on earth, in heaven, and so on, finds that he is really omnipresent, that all time is in him, and that he is not in time; that all the heavens are in him, that he is not in any heaven, and that all the gods that man ever worshipped are in him, and that he is not in any one of those gods. He was the manufacturer of gods and demons, of men and plants and animals and stones, and the real nature of man now stands unfolded to him as being higher than heaven, more perfect than this universe of ours, more infinite than infinite time, more omnipresent than the omnipresent ether. Thus alone, man becomes fearless, and becomes free. Then all delusions cease, all miseries vanish, all fears come to an end for ever. Birth goes away and with it death; pains fly, and with them fly away pleasures; earths vanish, and with them vanish heavens; bodies vanish, and with them vanishes the mind also. For that man disappears the whole universe, as it were. This searching, moving, continuous struggle of forces stops for ever,

and that which was manifesting itself as force and matter, as struggles of nature, as nature itself, as heavens and earths and plants and animals and men and angels, all that becomes transfigured into one infinite, unbreakable, unchangeable existence, and the knowing man finds that he is one with that existence. "Even as clouds of various colours come before the sky, there for a second and then vanish away," even so before this soul are all these visions coming, of earths and heavens, of the moon and the gods, of pleasures and pains; but they all pass away leaving the one infinite, blue, unchangeable sky. The sky never changes; it is the clouds that change. It is a mistake to think, that the sky is changed. It is a mistake to think that we are impure, that we are limited, that we are separate. The real man is the One Unit Existence.

Two questions now arise. The first is, "Is it possible to realise this ? So far it is doctrine, philosophy, but is it possible to realise it ?" It is. There are men still living in this world for whom delusion has vanished for ever. Do they immediately die after such realisation ? Not so soon as we should think. Two wheels joined by one pole are running together. If I get hold of one of the wheels and, with an axe, cut the pole asunder, the wheel which I have got hold of stops, but upon the other wheel is its past momentum, so it runs on a little and then falls down. This pure and perfect being, the soul, is one wheel, and this external hallucination of body and mind is the other wheel, joined together by the pole of work, of *Karma*. Knowledge is the axe which will sever the bond between the two, and the wheel of the soul will stop—stop thinking that it is coming and going, living and dying, stop thinking that it is nature and has wants and desires, and will find that it is perfect, desireless. But upon the other wheel, that of the body and mind, will be the momentum of past acts, so it will live for some time, until that momentum of past work is exhausted, until that momentum is worked away, and then the body and mind fall, and the soul becomes free No more is there any going to heaven and coming back, not even any going to the *Brahmaloka*, or to any of the highest of the spheres, for where is he to come from, or to go to ? The man who has in this life attained to this state, for whom, for a minute at least, the ordinary vision of the world has changed and the reality has been apparent, he is called the "Living Free." This is the goal of the

Vedantin, to attain living freedom.

Once in Western India I was travelling in the desert country on the coast of the Indian Ocean. For days and days I used to travel on foot through the desert, but it was to my surprise that I saw every day beautiful lakes, with trees all round them, and them, shadows of the trees upside down and vibrating there. "How wonderful it looks and they call this a desert country!" I said to myself. Nearly a month I travelled, seeing these wonderful lakes and trees and plants. One day I was very thirsty and wanted to have a drink of water, so I started to go to one of these clear, beautiful lakes, and as I approached, it vanished. And with a flash it came to my brain. "This is the mirage about which I have read all my life," and with that came also the idea that throughout the whole of this month, every day, I had been seeing the mirage and did not know it. The next morning I began my march. There was again the lake, but with it came also the idea that it was the mirage and not a true lake. So is it with this universe. We are all travelling in this mirage of the world day after day, month after month, year after year, not knowing that it is a mirage. One day it will break up, but it will come back again; the body has to remain under the power of past *Karma*, and so the mirage will come back. This world will come back upon us so long as we are bound by *Karma*: men, women, animals, plants, our attachments and duties, all will come back to us, but not with the same power. Under the influence of the new knowledge the strength of *Karma* will be broken, its poison will be lost. It becomes transformed, for along with it there comes the idea that we know it now, that the sharp distinction between the reality and the mirage has been known.

This world will not then be the same world as before. There is, however, a danger here. We see in every country people taking up this philosophy and saying, "I am beyond all virtue and vice, so I am not bound by any moral laws; I may do anything I like." You may find many fools in this country at the present time, saying, "I am not bound; I am God Himself; let me do anything I like." This is not right, although it is true that the soul is beyond all laws, physical, mental or moral. Within law is bondage; beyond law is freedom. It is also true that freedom is of the nature of the soul, it is its birthright: that real freedom of the soul shines through veils of matter in the form of the

apparent freedom of man Every moment of your life you feel that you are free. We cannot live, talk, or breathe for a moment without feeling that we are free : but, at the same time, a little thought shows us that we are like machines and not free. What is true then ? Is this idea of freedom a delusion ? One party holds that the idea of freedom is a delusion; another says that the idea of bondage is a delusion. How does this happen ? Man is really free, the real man cannot but be free; it is when he comes into the world of *Maya*, into name and form, that he becomes bound. Free-will is a misnormer. Will can never be free. How can it be ? It is only when the real man has become bound that his will comes into existence, and not before. The will of man is bound, but that which is the foundation of that will is eternally free. So, even in the state of bondage which we call human life or god-life, in heaven or on earth, there yet remains to us that recollection of the freedom which is ours by divine right. And consciously or unconsciously we are all struggling towards it. When a man has attained his own freedom, how can he be bound by any law ? No law in this universe can bind him, for this universe itself is his.

He is the whole universe. Either say he is the whole universe or say that to him there is no universe. How can he have then all these little ideas about six, and about country ? How can he say, I am a man, I am a woman, I am a child ? Are they not lies ? He knows that they are. How can he say that these are man's rights, and these others are woman's rights ? Nobody has rights; nobody separately exists. There is neither man nor woman; the soul is sexless, eternally pure. It is a lie to say that I am a man or a woman, or to say that I belong to this country or that All the world is my country, the whole universe is mine, because I have clothed myself with it as my body. Yet we see that there are people in this world who are ready to assert these doctrines, and at the same time do things which we should call filthy; and, if we ask them why they do so, they tell us that it is our delusion and that they can do nothing wrong. What is the test by which they are to be judged ? The test is here.

Though evil and good are both conditioned manifestations of the soul, yet evil is the most external coating, and good is the nearer coating of the real man, the Self. And unless a man cuts through the layer of evil he cannot reach the layer of good, and

unless he has passed through both the layers of good and evil he cannot reach the Self. He who reaches the Self, what remains attached to him? A little *Karma*, a little bit of the momentum of past life, but it is all good momentum. Until the bad momentum is entirely worked out and past impurities are entirely burned, it is impossible for any man to see and realise truth. So, what is left attached to the man who has reached the Self and seen the truth, is the remnant of the good impressions of past life, the good momentum. Even if he lives in the body and works incessantly, he works only to do good; his lips speak only benediction to all; his hands do only good works; his mind can only think good thoughts; his presence is a blessing wherever he goes. He is himself a living blessing. Such a man will, by his very presence, change even the most wicked persons into saints. Even if he does not speak, his very presence will be a blessing to mankind. Can such men do any evil; can they do wicked deeds? There is, you must remember, all the difference of pole to pole between realisation and mere talking. Any fool can talk. Even parrots talk Talking is one thing, and realising is another. Philosophies, and doctrines, and arguments, and books, and theories, and churches, and sects, and all these things are good in their own way; but when that realisation comes these things drop away. For instance, maps are good, but when you see the country itself, and look again at the maps, what a great difference you find! So those that have realised truth do not require the ratiocinations of logic and all other gymnastics of the intellect to make them understand the truth; it is to them the life of their lives, concretised, made more than tangible. It is, as the sages of the *Vedanta* say, "even as a fruit in your hand." you can stand up and say it is here. So those that have realised the truth will stand up and say, "Here is the Self." You may argue with them by the year, but they will smile at you; they will regard it all as child's prattle; they will let the child prattle on. They have realised the truth and are full. Suppose you seen a country, and another man comes to you and tries to argue with you that that country never existed, he may go on arguing indefinitely, but your only attitude of mind towards him must be to hold that that man is fit for a lunatic asylum. So the man of realisation says, "All this talk in the world about its little religions is but prattle;

realisation is the soul, the very essence of religion." Religion can be realised Are you ready ? Do you want it ? You will get the realisation if you do, and then you will be truly religious. Until you have attained realisation there is no difference between you and atheists. The atheists are sincere, but the man who says that he believes in religion and never attempts to realise it, is not sincere.

The next question is to know what comes after realisation. Suppose we have realised this oneness of the universe, that we are that One Infinite Being; and suppose we have realised that this Self is the Only Existence, and that it is the same Self which is manifesting in all these various phenomenal forms, what becomes of us after that ? Shall we become inactive, get into a corner and sit down there and die away ? "What good will it do to the world ?" That old question ! In the first place why should it do good to the world ? Is there any reason why it should ? What right has any one to ask the question, "What goods will it do to the world ?" What is meant by that ? A baby likes candies. Suppose you are conducting investigations in connection with some subject of electricity and the baby asks you, "Does it buy candies ?" "No," you answer. "Then what good will it do ?" says the baby. So men stand up and say, "What good will this do to the world; will it give us money ?" "No." "Then what good is there in it ?" That is what men mean by doing good to the world. Yet religious realisation does all the good to the world. People are afraid that when they attain to it, when they realise that there is but One, the fountains of love will be dried up, that everthing in life will go away, and that all they love will vanish for them, as it were, in this life aud in the life to come. People never stop to think that those who bestowed the least thought on their own individualities have been the greatest workers in the world. Then alone a man loves when he finds that the object of his love is not any low, little, mortal thing. Then alone a man loves when he finds that the object of his love is not a clod of earth, but is the veritable God Himself. The wife will love the husband the more when she thinks that the husband is God Himself The husband will love the wife the more when he knows that the wife is God Himself. That mother will love the children more, who thinks that the children are God Himself. That man will love his greatest enemy, who knows that that very

enemy is God Himself. That man will love a holy man, who knows that the holy man is God Himself, and that very man will also love the unholiest of men because he knows the background of that unholiest of men is even He, the Lord. Such a man becomes a world-mover for whom his little self is dead and God stands in its place. The whole universe will become transfigured to him. That which is painful and miserable will all vanish; struggles will all depart and go. Instead of being a prison-house, where we every day struggle and fight and compete for a morsel of bread, this universe will then be to us a play-ground Beautiful will be this universe then ! Such a man alone has the right to stand up and say, "How beautiful is this world !" He alone has the right to say that it is all good This will be the great good to the world resulting from such realisation, that instead of this world going on with all its friction and clashings, if all mankind today realise only a bit of that great truth, the aspect of the whole world will be changed, and, in place of fighting and quarrelling, there would be a reign of peace. This indecent and brutal hurry which forces us to go ahead of every one else will then vanish from the world With it will vanish all struggle, with it will vanish all hate, with it will vanish all jealousy, and all evil will vanish away for ever. Gods will live then upon this earth. This very earth will then become heaven, and what evil can there be when gods are playing with gods, when gods are working with gods, and gods are loving gods ? That is the great utility of divine realisation. Everything that you see in society will be changed and transfigured then. No more will you think of man as evil, and that is the first great gain. No more will you stand up and sneeringly cast a glance at a poor man or woman who has made a mistake. No more, ladies, will you look down with contempt upon the poor woman who walks the street in the night, because you will see even there God Himself. No more will you think of jealousy and punishments. They will all vanish and love, the great ideal of love, will be so powerful that no whip and cord will be necessary to guide mankind aright.

If one-millionth part of the men and women who live in this world, simply sit down and for a few minutes say, "You are all God, O ye men and O ye animals, and living beings, you are all the manifestations of the one living Deity !" the whole world will be changed in half an hour. Instead of throwing tremendous

bomb-shells of hatred into every corner, instead of projecting currents of jealousy and of evil thought, in every county people will think that it is all He. He is all that you see and feel How can you see evil until there is evil in you? How can you see the thief, unless he is there, sitting in the heart of your heart? How can you see the murderer until you are yourself the murderer? Be good, and evil will vanish for you The whole universe will thus be changed This is the greatest gain to society. This is the great gain to the human organism. These thoughts were thought out, worked out amongst individuals in ancient times in India. For various reasons, such as the exclusiveness of the teachers and foreign conquest, those thoughts were not allowed to spread Yet they are grand truths, and wherever they have been working man has become divine. My whole life has been changed by the touch of one of these divine men, about whom I am going to speak to you next Sunday, and the time is coming when these thoughts will be cast abroad over the whole world Instead of living in monasteries, instead of being confined to books of philosophy to be studied only by the learned, instead of being the exclusive possession of sects and of a few of the learned, they will all be sown broadcast over the whole world, so that they may become the common property of the saint and the sinner, of men and women and children, of the learned and of the ignorant They will then permeate the atmosphere of the world, and the very air that we breathe will tell with every one of its pulsations "Thou art That" And the whole universe with its myriads of suns and moons, through everything that speaks, with one voice will say, "Thou art That."

20

PRACTICAL VEDANTA*

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

PART I

I have been asked to say something about the practical position of the Vedanta Philosophy As I have told you, theory is very good indeed, but how are we to carry it into practice? If it be absolutely impracticable, no theory is of any value whatever, except as intellectual gymnastics The Vedanta, therefore, as a religion, must be intensely practical We must be able to carry it out in every part of our lives And not only this, the fictitious differentiation between religion and the life of the world must vanish, for the Vedanta teaches Oneness—one life throughout The ideals of religion must cover the whole field of life, they must enter into all our thoughts, and more and more into practice I will enter gradually on the practical side as we proceed But this series of lectures is intended to be a basis, and so we must first apply ourselves to theories, and understand how they are worked out, proceeding from forest caves to busy streets and cities, and one peculiar feature we find is that many of these thoughts have been the outcome, not of retirement into forests, but have emanated from persons whom we expect to lead the busiest lives—from ruling monarchs

Shvetaketu was the son of Aruni, a sage, most probably a

*Speech Delivered in London, 10th November, 1986.

recluse. He was brought up in the forest, but he went to the city of Panchalas and appeared at the court of the king, Pravahana Jaivali. The king asked him : "Do you know how beings depart hence at death ?" "No, Sir." "Do you know how they return higher ?" "No, Sir " "Do you know the way of the fathers and the way of the goods ?" "No, Sir." Then the king asked other questions. Shvetaketu could not answer them. So the king told him that he knew nothing. The boy went back to his father and the father admitted that he himself could not answer these questions It was not that he was unwilling to answer these questions. It was not that he was unwilling to teach the boy, but he did not know these things. So Shvetaketu returned to the king with his father and they both asked to be taught these secrets. The king said that these things had been hitherto known only among kings; the priests never knew them. He, however, proceeded to teach them what they desired to know. In various Upanishads we find that this Vedanta Philosophy is not the outcome of meditation in the forests only, but that the very best parts of it were thought out and expressed by brains which were busiest in the everyday affairs of life We cannot conceive any man busier than an absolute monarch, a man who is ruling over millions of people, and yet, some of these rulers were deep thinkers.

Everything goes to show that this philosophy must be very practical, and later on, when we come to the Bhagavad-Gita—most of you, perhaps, have read it, it is the best commentary we have on the Vedanta Philosophy—curiously enough the scene is laid on the battle-field, where Krishna teaches this philosophy to Arjuna, and the doctrine which stands out luminously in every page of the Gita is intense activity, but in the midst of it, eternal calmness. This is the secret of work, to attain which is the goal of the Vedanta Inactivity, as we understand it, in the sense of passivity, certainly cannot be the goal. Were it so, then the walls around us would be the most intelligent; they are inactive. Clods of earth, stumps of trees, would be the greatest sages in the world; they are inactive. Nor does inactivity become activity when it is combined with passion. Real activity, which is the goal of Vedanta, is combined with eternal calmness, the calmness which cannot be ruffled, the balance of mind which is never disturbed, whatever happens. And we all know from our experience in life that that is the best attitude for work.

I have been asked many times how we can work if we do not have the passion which we generally feel for work. I also thought in that way years ago, but as I am growing older, getting more experience, I find it is not true. The less passion there is, the better we work. The calmer we are, the better for us, and the more the amount of work we can do. When we let loose our feelings we waste so much energy, shatter our nerves, disturb our minds, and accomplish very little work. The energy which ought to have gone out as work is spent as mere feeling, which courts for nothing. It is only when the mind is very calm and collected that the whole of its energy is spent in doing good work. And if you read the lives of the great workers which the wrold has produced, you will find that they were wonderfully calm men. Nothing, as it were, could throw them off their balance. That is why the man who becomes angry never does a great amount of work, and the man whom nothing can make angry accomplishes so much. The man who gives way to anger, or hatred, or any other passion, cannot work, he only breaks himself to pieces, and does nothing practical. It is the calm, forgiving, equable, well-balanced mind that does the greatest amount of work.

The Vedanta preaches the ideal, and the ideal, as we know, is always far ahead of the real, of the practical, as we may call it. There are two tendencies in human nature, one to harmonise the ideal with the life, and the other to elevate the life to the ideal. It is a great thing to understand this, for the former tendency is the temptation of our lives. I thank that I can only do a certain class of work. Most of it, perhaps, is bad, most of it, perhaps, has a motive power of passion behind it, anger, or greed, or selfishness. Now if any man comes to preach to me a certain ideal, and the first step towards it is to give up selfishness, to give up self-enjoyment, I think that is impractical. But when a man brings an ideal which can be reconciled with my selfishness, I am glad at once, and jump at it. That is the ideal for me. As the word "orthodox" has been manipulated into various forms, so has been the word "practical," "practical." "My doxy is orthodoxy; your doxy is heterodoxy." So with practicality. What I think is practical, is to me the only practicality in the world. If I am a shopkeeper, I think shopkeeping the only practical pursuit in the world. If I am a thief, I think stealing is the best means of being practical; others are not practical. You see how we all use this

word practical for things *we* like and can do. Therefore, I will ask you to understand that Vedanta, though it is intensely practical, is always so in the sense of the ideal. It does not preach an impossible ideal, however high it is, and it is high enough for an ideal. In one word this ideal is that you are divine. "Thou art That." This is the essence of Vedanta; after all its ramifications and intellectual gymnastics you know the human soul to be pure and omniscient; you see that such superstitions as birth and death would be entire nonsense when spoken in connection with the soul. The soul was never born and will never die, and all these ideas that we are going to die and are afraid to die are mere superstitions. And all such ideas, as we can do this, or cannot do that, are superstitions. We can do everything. The Vedanta teaches men to have faith in themselves first. As certain religions of the world say that a man who does not believe in a personal God outside of himself is an atheist, so the Vedanta says, a man who does not believe in himself is an atheist. Not believing in the glory of our own soul is what the Vedanta calls atheism. To many this is, no doubt, a terrible idea, and most of us think that this ideal can never be reached, but the Vedanta insists that it can be realised by every one. There is neither man nor woman nor child, nor difference of race or sex, nor anything that stands as a bar to the realisation of the ideal, because Vedanta shows that it is realised already, it is already there.

All the powers in the Universe are already ours It is we who have put our hands before our eyes, and cry that it is dark. Know that there is no darkness around us. Take the hands away and there is the light which was from the beginning. Darkness never existed, weakness never existed. We who are fools cry that we are weak; we who are fools cry that we are impure. Thus Vedanta not only insists that the ideal is practical, but that it has been so all the time, and this Ideal, this Reality, is our own nature. Everything else that you see is false, untrue. As soon as you say, "I am a little mortal being," you are saying something which is not true, you are giving that lie to yourselves, you are hypnotising yourselves into something vile and weak and wretched.

It recognises no sin, it only recognises error; and the greatest error, says the Vedanta, is to say that you are weak, that you are a sinner, a miserable creature, and that you have no power, and you cannot do this and that. Every time you think in that way,

you, as it were, rivet one more link in the chain that binds you down, you add one more layer of hypnotism on to your own soul. Therefore, whatsoever thinks he is weak is wrong, whosoever thinks he is impure, is wrong, and is throwing a bad thought into the world This we must always bear in mind, that in the Vedanta there is no attempt at reconciling the present life, the hypnotised life, this false life which we have assumed, with the ideal, but this false life must go, and the real life, which is always existing, must manifest itself, must shine out. No man becomes purer and purer, it is a matter of greater manifestation The veil drops away, and the native purity of the soul begins to manifest itself. Everything is ours already, infinite purity, freedom, love and power.

The Vedanta also says, that not only can this be realised in the depths of forests, or caves, but by men in all possible conditions of life We have seen that the people who discovered these truths were neither living in caves nor forests, nor following the ordinary vocations of life, but men who, we have every reason to believe, led the busiest of lives, men who had to command armies, to sit on thrones, and look to the welfare of millions—and all these, in the days of absolute monarchy, and not as in these days, when a king is to a great extent a mere figure-head. Yet they could find time to think out all these thoughts, to realise them, and to teach them to humanity. How much more then should it be practical for us whose lives, compared with theirs, are lives of leisure ? That we cannot realise them is a shame to us, seeing that we are comparatively free all the time, having very little to do. My requirements are as nothing, compared with those of an ancient absolute monarch. My wants are as nothing compared with the demands of Arjuna on the battle-field of Kurukshetra, commanding a huge army; and yet he could find time in the midst of the din and turmoil of battle to talk the highest philosophy, and to carry it into his life also. Surely, we ought to be able to do as much in this life of ours, comparatively free, easy and comfortable. Most of us here have more time than we think we have, if we really want to use it for good. With the amount of freedom we have, we can attain to two hundred ideals in this life, if we will, but we must not degrade the ideal to the actual. One of the most insinuating things comes to us in the shape of persons who apologise for our mistakes, and teach us how to make special excuses for all our foolish wants, and foolish desires; and we think

that their ideal is the only ideal we need have. But it is not so. The Vedanta teaches no such thing. The actual should be reconciled to the ideal, the present life should be made to coincide with life eternal.

For you must always remember that the one central idea of Vedanta is this Oneness. There are no two in anything, no two lives, nor even two different kinds of life for the two worlds. You will find the Vedas speaking of heavens and things like that, at first, but later on, when they come to the highest ideals of their philosophy, they brush away all these things. There is but One Life, One World, One Existence, Everything is that One, the difference is in degree and not in kind. The difference between our lives is not in kind. The Vedanta entirely denies such ideas as that animals are separate from men, and that they were made and created by God to be used for our food.

Some people have been kind enough to start an anti-vivisection society. I asked a member, "Why do you think, my friend, that it is quite lawful to kill animals for food, and not to kill one or two for scientific experiments ?" He replied, "Vivisection is most horrible, but animals have been given to us for food." Oneness includes all animals. If man's life is immortal, so also is the animal's The difference is only in degree and not in kind. The amoeba and I are the same, the difference is only in degree, and from the standpoint of the highest life, all these differences vanish. A man may see a great deal of difference between grass and a little tree, but if you mount very high, the grass and the biggest tree will appear much the same. So, from the standpoint of the highest ideal, the lowest animal and the highest man are the same. If you believe there is a God, the animals and the highest creatures must be the same. A God who is partial to his children called men, and cruel to his children called brute beasts, is worse than a demon I would rather die a hundred times than worship such a God. My whole life would be a fight with such a God. But there is no difference and those who say there is, are irresponsible, heartless people, who do not know. Here is a case of the word practical used in a wrong sense. I myself may not be a very strict vegetarian, but I understand the ideal. When I eat meat I know it is wrong. Even if I am bound to eat it under certain circumstances, I know it is cruel. I must not drag my ideal down to the actual and apologise for my weak conduct in this way. The ideal

is not to eat flesh, not to injure any being, for all animals are my brothers If you can think of them as your brothers, you have made a little headway towards the brotherhood of all souls, not to speak of the brotherhood of man ! This is child's play. You generally find that this is not very acceptable to many, because it teaches them to give up the actual, and go higher up to the ideal. But if you bring out a theory which is reconciled with their present conduct, they regard it as entirely practical.

There is this strongly conservative tendency in human nature; we do not like to move one step forward. I think of mankind just as I read of persons who become frozen in snow; all such, they say, want to go to sleep, and if you try to drag them up, they say, "Let me sleep. It is so beautiful to sleep in the snow," and they die there in that sleep. So is our nature. That is what we are doing all our life, getting frozen from the feet upwards, and yet wanting to sleep. Therefore, you must struggle towards the ideal, and if a man comes who wants to bring that ideal down to your level, and teach a religion that does not carry that highest level, do not listen to him. To me that is an impracticable religion. But if a man teaches a religion which presents the highest ideal, I am ready for him. Beware when anyone is trying to apologise for sense vanities and sense weaknesses. If anyone wants to preach that way to us, poor, sense-bound clods of earth as we have made ourselves, by following that teaching we shall never progress. I have seen many of these things, I have had some experience of the world, and my country is the land where religious sects grow like mushrooms. Every year new sects arise. But one thing I have marked, that it is only those that never want to reconcile the man of flesh with the man of truth, that make progress. Wherever there is this false idea of reconciling fleshly vanities with the highest ideals, of dragging down God to the level of man, there comes decay. Man should not be degraded to worldly slavery, but should be raised up to God.

At the same time, there is another side to the question. We must not look down with contempt on others. All of us are going towards the same goal. The difference between weakness and strength is one of degree; the difference between virtue and vice is one of degree; the difference between heaven and hell is one of degree; the difference between life and death is one of degree; all differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because

Oneness is the secret of everything. All is One, which manifests Itself, either as thought, or life, or soul, or body, and the difference is only in degree. As such, we have no right to look down with contempt upon those who are not developed exactly in the same degree as we are. Condemn none; if you can stretch out a helping hand, do so. If you cannot, fold your hands, bless your brothers and let them go their own way. Dragging down and condemning is not the way to work. Never is work accomplished in that way. We spend our energies in condemning others. Criticism and condemnation is a vain way of spending our energies, for in the long run we come to learn that all are seeing the same thing, are more or less approaching the same ideal, and that most of our differences are mere differences of expression.

Take the idea of sin. I was telling you just now the Vedantic idea of it, and the other idea is that man is a sinner. They are practically the same, only the one takes the positive and the other the negative side. One shows to man his strength and the other his weakness. There may be weakness, says the Vedanta, but never mind, we want to grow. Disease was found out as soon as man was born Everyone knows his disease; it requires no one to tell us what our diseases are. But thinking all the time that we are diseased will not cure us; medicine is necessary. We may forget anything outside, we may try to become hypocrites to the external world, but in our heart of hearts we all know our weaknesses. But, says the Vedanta, being reminded of weakness does not help much, give strength, and strength does not come by thinking of weakness all the time. The remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness, but thinking of strength. Teach men of the strength that is already within them. Instead of telling them they are sinners, the Vedanta takes the opposite position, and says, "You are pure and perfect, and what you call sin does not belong to you." Sins are very low degrees of Self-manifestation; manifest your Self in a high degree. That is the one thing to remember; all of us can do that. Never say, "No" : never say, "I cannot," for you are infinite. Even time and space are as nothing compared with your nature. You can do anything and everything you are almighty.

There are the principles of ethics, but we shall now come down lower and work out the details. We shall see how this Vedanta can be carried into our everyday life, the city life, the

country life, the national life and the home life of every nation. For, if a religion cannot help man wherever he may be, wherever he stands, it is not of much use; it will remain only a theory for the chosen few. Religion, to help mankind, must be ready and able to help him in whatever condition he is, in servitude or in freedom, in the depths of degradation or on the heights of purity; everywhere, equally, it should be able to come to his aid. The principles of Vedanta, or the ideal of Religion, or whatever you may call it, will be fulfilled by its capacity for performing this great function.

The ideal of faith in ourselves is of the greatest help to us. If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practised, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have, would have vanished. Throughout the history of mankind, if any motive power has been more potent than another in the lives of all great men and women, it is that of faith in themselves. Born with the consciousness that they were to be great, they became great. Let a man go down as low as possible; there must come a time when out of sheer desperation he will take an upward curve and will learn to have faith in himself. But it is better for us that we should know it from the very first. Why should we have all these bitter experiences in order to gain faith in ourselves ? We can see that all the difference between man and man is owing to the existence or non-existence or faith in himself. Faith in ourselves will do everything. I have experienced it in my own life, and am still doing so, and as I grow older that faith is becoming stronger and stronger. He is an atheist who does not believe in himself. The old religions said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is the atheist who does not believe in himself. But it is not selfish faith, because the Vedanta, again, is the doctrine of Oneness. It means faith in all, because you are all. Love for yourselves means love for all, for you are all one; love for animals, love for everything. It is the great faith which will make the world better. I am sure of that. He is the highest man who can say with truth, "I know all about myself." Do you know how much energy, how many powers, how many forces, are still lurking behind that frame of yours ? What scientist has known all that is in man ? Millions of years have passed since man first came here, and yet but one infinitesimal part of his powers has been manifested. Therefore,

you must not say that you are weak. How do you know what possibilities lie behind that degradation on the surface? You know what little of that which is within you. For behind you is the ocean of infinite power and blessedness.

"This Atman is first to be heard of." Hear day and night that you are the Soul. Repeat it to yourselves day and night till it enters into your very veins, till it tingles in every drop of blood, till it is in your flesh and bone. Let the whole body be full of that one ideal, "I am the birthless, the deathless, the blissful, the omniscient, the omnipotent, ever-glorious Soul." Think on it day and night; think on it till it becomes part and parcel of your life. Meditate upon it, and out of that will come work. "Out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh," and out of the fullness of the heart the hand worketh also. Action will come. Fill yourselves with the ideal; whatever you do, think well on it. All your action will be magnified, transformed, defied, by the very power of the thought. If matter is powerful, thought is omnipotent. Bring this thought to bear upon your life, fill yourselves with the thought of your almightiness, your majesty, and your glory. Would to God no superstitions had been put into your head! Would to God we had not been surrounded from our birth by all these superstitions influences and paralysing ideas of our weakness and vileness! Would to God that mankind had had an easier path through which to attain to the noblest and highest truths! But man had to pass through all this; do not make the path more difficult for those who are coming after you.

These are sometimes terrible doctrine to teach. I know people who get frightened at these ideas, but for those who want to be practical, this is the first thing to learn. Never tell yourselves or others that you are weak. Do good if you can, but do not injure the world. You know in your inmost heart that many of your limited ideas, this humbling of yourself, and praying and weeping to imaginary Beings, are superstitions. Tell me one case where these prayers have been answered All the answers that came were from your own hearts. You know there are no ghosts, but no sooner are you in the dark than you feel a little creepy sensation. That is so because in our childhood we have had all these fearful ideas put into our heads. But do not teach these things to others, through fear of society, and public opinion, through fear of incurring the hatred of friends, or for fear of

losing cherished superstitions. Be masters of all these. What is there to be taught more in religion than the Oneness of the Universe, and faith in one's self ? All the works of mankind for thousands of years past have been towards this one goal, and mankind is yet working it out. It is your turn now and you already know the truth. For it has been taught on all sides. Not only philosophy and psychology, but materialistic sciences have declared it. Where is the scientific man today who fears to acknowledge the truth of this Oneness of the universe ? Who is there who dares talk of many words ? All these are superstitions. There is only one life and one world, and this one life and one world is appearing to us as manifold. This manifoldness is like a dream. When you dream, one dream passes away and another comes. You do not live in your dreams. The dreams come one after another, scene after scene unfolds before you. So it is in this world of ninety per cent misery and ten per cent happiness. Perhaps after a while it will appear as ninety per cent happiness, and we shall call it heaven, but a time comes to the sage when the whole thing vanishes, and this world appears as God Himself, and his own soul as God. It is not therefore that there are many worlds, it is not that there are many lives. All this manifoldness in the manifestation of that One. That One is manifesting Himself as many, as matter, spirit, mind, thought and everything else. It is that One, manifesting Himself as many. Therefore, the first step for us to take is to teach the truth to ourselves and to others.

Let the world resound with this ideal and let superstitions vanish. Tell it to men who are weak and persist in telling it. You are the Pure One; awake and arise, O mighty one, this sleep does not become you. Awake and arise, it does not befit you. Think not that you are weak aud miserable. Almighty, arise and awake, and manifest your own nature. It is not fitting that you think yourself a sinner. It is not fitting that you think yourself weak Say that to the world, say it to yourselves, and see what a practical result comes, see how with an electric flash everything is manifested, how everything is changed. Tell that to mankind and show them their power. Then we shall learn how to apply it in our daily lives.

To be able to use what we call Viveka (discrimination), to learn how in every moment of our lives, in every one of our actions, to discriminate between what is right and wrong, true and

false, we shall have to know the test of truth, which is Purity, Oneness. Everything that makes for Oneness is truth. Love is truth, and hatred is false, becaure hatred makes for multiplicity. It is hatred that separates man from man; therefore, it is wrong and false. It is disintegrating power, it separates and destroys.

Love binds, love makes for that Oneness You become one, the mother with the child, families with the city, the whole world becomes one with the animals. For love is Existence, God Himself, and all this is the manifestation of that One Love, more or less expressed. The difference is only in degree, but it is the manifestation of that One Love throughout. Therefore, in all our actions we have to judge whether it is making for diversity or for Oneness. If for diversity, we have to give it up, but if it makes for Oneness we are sure it is good. So with our thoughts; we have to decide whether they make for disintegration, multiplicity, or for oneness, binding soul to soul, and bringing one influence to bear. If they do this, we will take them up, and if not, we will throw them off as criminal.

The whole idea of ethics is that it does not depend on anything unknowable, it does not teach anything unknown, but in the language of the Upanishad, "The God whom we worship as an unkown God, the same I preach unto thee." It is through the Self that you know anything. I see the chair, but to see the chair, I have first to perceive myself and then the chair. It is in and through the Self that the chair is perceived. It is in and through the Self that you are known to me, that the whole world is known to me, and therefore to say this Self is unknown is sheer nonsense. Take off the Self and the whole Universe vanishes. In and through the Self all knowledge comes. Therefore, it is the best known of all. It is yourself, that which you call I. You may wonder how this I of me can be the I of you. You may wonder how this limited I can be the unlimited Infinite, but it is so. The limited is a mere fiction. The Infinite has been covered up, as it were. and a little of It is manifesting as the I. Limitation can never come upon the unlimited, it is a fiction. The Self is known, therefore, to every one of us, man, woman or child, and even to animals. Without knowing Him we can neither live nor move, nor have our being; without knowing this Lord of all, we cannot breathe or live a second. The God of the Vedanta is the most known of all, and is not the outcome of imagination.

If this is not preaching a practical God, how else could you teach a practical God ? Where is there a more practical God than He, whom I see before me, a God omnipresent, in every being, more real than our senses ? For you are He, the Omnipresent God Almighty, the Soul of your souls, and if I say you are not, I tell an untruth, I know it, whether at all times I realise it or not. He is the Oneness, the Unity of all, the Reality of all life and all existence.

These ideas of the ethics of Vedanta have to be worked out in detail, and therefore you must have patience As I have told you, we want to take the subject in detail and work it up thoroughly, to see how the ideas grow from very low ideals, and how the one great Ideal of Oneness has developed and become shaped into the universal love, and we ought to study these, in order to avoid dangers. The world cannot find time to work it up from the lowest steps. But what is the use of our standing on higher steps if we cannot give the truth to others coming afterwards ? Therefore, it is better to study it in all its workings; and first, it is absolutely necessary to clear the intellectual portion, although we know that intellectuality is almost nothing, for it is the heart that is of most importance. It is through the heart that the Lord is seen, and not through the intellect. The intellect is only the street-cleaner, cleansing the path for us, a secondary worker, the policeman; but the policeman is not a positive necessity for the workings of society. He is only to stop disturbances, to check wrong-doing, and that is all the work required of the intellect. When you read intellectual books, you think when you have mastered them, "Bless the Lord that I am out of them," because the intellect is blind and cannot move of itself, it has neither hands nor feet. It is feeling that works, that moves with speed infinitely superior to that of electricity or anything else. Do you feel ?—that is the question. If you do, you will see the Lord. It is the feeling that you have today that will be intensified, defied, raised to the highest platform, until it feels everything, the oneness in everything, till it feels God in itself and in others. The intellect can never do that. "Different methods of speaking words, different methods explaining the texts of books, these are for the enjoyment of the learned, not for the salvation of the soul."

Those of you who have read Thomas a Kempis, know how

in every page he insists on this, and almost every holy man in the world has insisted on it. Intellect is necessary, for without it we fall into crude errors and make all sorts of mistakes. Intellect checks these, but beyond that, do not try to build anything upon it. It is an inactive, secondary help; the real help is feeling, love. Do you feel for others ? If you do, you are growing in Oneness. If you do not feel for others, you may be the most intellectual giant ever born, but you will be nothing; you are but dry intellect, and you will remain so. And if you feel, even if you cannot read any book, and do not know any language, you are in the right way. The Lord is yours.

Do you not know from the history of the world, where the power of the prophets lay ? Where as it ? In the intellect ? Did any of them write a fine book on philosophy, on the most intricate ratiocinations of logic ? Not one of them. They only spoke a few words. Feel like Christ and you will be a Christ; feel like Buddha and you will be a Buddha. It is feeling that is the life, the strength, the vitality, without which no amount of intellectual activity can reach God. Intellect is like limbs without the power of locomotion. It is only when feeling enters and gives them motion that they move and work on others. That is so all over the world, and it is a thing which you must always remember. It is one of the most practical things in Vedantic morality, for it is the teaching of the Vedanta that you are all prophets, and all must be prophets. The book is not the proof of your conduct, but you are the proof of the book. How do you know that a book teaches truth ? Because you are truth and feel it. That is what Vedanta says. What is the proof of the Christs and Buddhas of the world ? That you and I feel like them. That is how you and I understand that they were true. Our prophet-soul is the proof of their prophet-soul. Your godhead is the proof of God Himself. If you are not a prophet there never has been anything true of God. If you are not God there never was any God, and never will be. This, says the Vedanta, is the ideal to follow. Every one of us will have become a prophet, and you are that already. Only *know* it. Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think it. If there is sin, this is the only sin—to say that you are weak, or others are weak.

PART II*

I will relate to you a very ancient story from the Chhandogya Upanishad, which tells how knowledge came to a boy. The form of the story is very crude, but we shall find that it contains a principle. A young boy said to his mother, "I am going to study the Vedas. Tell me the name of my father, and my caste." The mother was not a married woman, and in India the child of a woman who has not been married is considered an outcaste; he is not recognised by society, and is not entitled to study the Vedas. So the poor mother said, "My child, I do not know your family name; I was in service, and served in different places; I do not know who your father is, but my name is Jabala and your name is Satyakama." The little child went to a sage, and asked to be taken as a student. The sage asked him, "What is the name of your father, and what is your caste ?" The body repeated to him what he had heard from his mother. The sage at once said, "None but a Brahmana could speak such a damaging truth about himself You are a Brahmana and I will teach you. You have not swerved from truth." So he kept the boy with him and educated him.

Now come some of the peculiar methods of education in ancient India. This teacher gave Satyakama four hundred lean, weak cows to take care of, and sent him to the forest. There he went and lived for some time The teacher had told him to come back when the herd would increase to the number of one thousand. After a few years, one day Satyakama heard a big bull in the herd-saying to him, "We are a thousand now; take us back to your teacher. I will teach you a little of Brahman." "Say on Sir," said Satyakama. Then the bull said, "The East is a part of the Lord, so is the West, so is the South, so is the North. The four cardinal points are the four parts of Brahman. Fire will also teach you something of Brahman." Fire was the great symbol in those days, and every student had to procure fire and make offerings. So on the following day, Satyakama started for his Guru's house, and when in the evening he had performed his oblation, and worshipped at the fire, and was sitting near it, he heard a voice come from the fire, "O Satyakama." "Speak,

*Speech delivered in London, 12th November, 1896.

Lord," said Satyakama. (Perhaps you may remeber a very similar story in the Old Testament, how Samuel heard a mysterious voice.) "O Satyakama, I am come to teach you a little of Brahman. This earth is a portion of that Brahman. The sky and the heaven are portions of It. The ocean is a part of that Brahman." Then the fire said that a certain bird would also teach him something. Satyakama continued his journey and when he had performed his evening sacrifice a swan came to him and said, "I will teach you something about Brahman. This fire which you worship, O Satyakama, is a part of that Brahman. The sum is a part, the moon is a part, the lightning is a part of that Brahman. A bird called Madgu will tell you more about It." The next evening that bird came, and a similar voice was heard by Satyakama, "I will tell you something about Brahman. Breath is a part of Brahman, sight is a part, hearing is a part, the mind is a part." Then the boy arrived at his teacher's place and presented himself before him with due reverence. No sooner had the teacher seen this disciple, than he remarked, "Satyakama, thy face shines like a knower of Brahman! Who then has taught you?" "Beings other than men," replied Satyakama. But I wish that you should teach me, Sir. For I have heard from men like you, that knowledge which is learnt from a Guru alone, leads to the supreme good." Then the sage taught him the same knowledge which he had received from the gods. "And nothing was left out, yea, nothing was left out."

Now, apart from the allegories of what the bull, the fire, and the birds taught, we see the tendency of the thought and the direction in which it was going in those days. The great idea of which we here see the germ, is that all these voices are inside ourselves. As we understand these truths better we find that the voice is in our own heart, and the student understood that all the time he was hearing the truth, but his explanation was not correct. He was interpreting the voice as coming from the external world, while all the time, it was within him. The second idea that we get is, that of making the knowledge of the Brahman practical. The world is always seeking the practical possibilities of religion, and we find in these stories how it was becoming more and more practical every day. The truth was shown through everything with which the students were familiar. The fire they were worshipping was Brahman, the earth was a part of Brahman, and

so on.

The next story belongs to Upakosala Kamalayana, a disciple of this Satyakama, who went to be taught by him and dwelt with him for some time. Now Satyakama went away on a journey, and the student became very downhearted, and when the teacher's wife came and asked him why he was not eating, the boy said, "I am to unhappy to eat." Then a voice came from the fire he was worshipping, saying, "This life is Brahman. Brahman is the ether, and Brahman is happiness Know Brahman." "I know, Sir," the boy replied, "that life is Brahman, but that It is ether and happiness I do not know." Then it explained that the two words ether and happiness signified one thing in reality, viz., the sentient ether (pure intelligence) that resides in the heart. So, it taught him Brahman as life and as the ether in the heart. Then the Fire taught him : "This earth, food, fire and sun, whom you worship, are forms of Brahman. The person that is seen in the sun, I am He. He who knows this and meditates on Him, all his sins vanish and he has long life and becomes happy He who lives in the cardinal points, the moon, the stars, and the water, I am He. He who lives in this life, the ether, the heavens, and the lightning. I am He " Here too we see the same idea of practical religion. The things which they were worshipping, such as, the fire, the sun, the moon, and so forth, and the voice with which they were familiar, from the subject of the stories which explain them and give them a higher meaning. And this is the real, practical side of Vedanta. It does not destroy the world, but it explains it; it does not destroy the person, but explains him; it does not destroy the individuality but explains it, by showing the real individuality. It does not show that this world is vain, and does not exist, but it says, "Understand what this world is, so that it may not hurt you." The voice did not say to Satyakama that the fire which he was worshipping was all wrong, or the sun, or the moon, or the lightning, or anything else, but it showed him that the same spirit which was inside the sun, and moon, and lightning, and the fire, and the earth, was in him, so that everything became transformed, as it were, in the eyes of Satyakama. The fire which was merely a material fire before, in which to make oblations, assumed a new aspect, and became the Lord. The earth became transformed, life became transformed, the sun, the moon, the stars, the lightning, everything became transformed, and deified. Their

real nature was known. The theme of the Vedanta is to see the Lord in everything, to see things in their real nature, not as they appear to be. Then another lesson is taught in the Upanishads: "He who shines through the eyes in Brahman; He is the Beautiful One, He is the Shining One. He shines in all these worlds." A certain peculiar light, a commentator says, which comes to the pure man, is what is meant by the light in the eyes, and it is said that when a man is pure such a light will shine in his eyes, and that light belongs really to the Soul within, which is everywhere. It is the same light which shines in the planets, in the stars, and suns.

I will now read to you some other doctrine of these ancient Upanishads, about birth and death and so on. Perhaps it will interest you. Svetaketu went to the king of the Panchalas, and the king asked him, "Do you know where people go when they die? Do you know how they come back? Do you know why the other world does not become full?" The boy replied that he did not know. Then he went to his father and asked him the same questions. The father said, "I do not know," and they both returned to the king. The king said this knowledge was never known to the priests, it was only with the kings, and that was the reason why kings ruled the world. This man served the king for some time, and at last the king said he would teach him. "The other world, O Gautama, is the fire. The sun is its fuel. The rays are the smoke. The day is the flame. The moon is the embers. And the stars are the sparks. In this fire the gods pour libation of faith and from this libation king Soma is born." So on he goes. "You need not make oblation to that little fire; the whole world is that fire, and this oblation, this worship is continually going on. The gods, and the angels, and everybody is worshipping it. Man is the greatest symbol of fire, the body of man." Here also we see the ideal becoming practical and Brahman is seen in everything. The principle that underlies all these stories is, that invented symbolism may be good and helpful, but already better symbols exist than any we can invent. You may invent an image through which to worship God, but a better image already exists, the living man. You may build a temple in which to worship God, and that may be good, but a better one, a much higher one, already exists, the human body.

You remember that the Vedas have two parts, the ceremonial

and the knowledge portions In time ceremonials had multiplied and become so intricate that it was almost hopeless to disentangle them, and in the Upanishads we find that the ceremonials are almost done away with, but gently, by explaining them. We see that in old times they had these oblations and sacrifices, then the philosophers came, and instead of snatching away the symbols from the hands of the ignorant, instead of taking the negative position which we, unfortunately, find so general in modern reforms, gave them something to take their place. "Here is the symbol of fire," they said. "Very good ! But here is another symbol, the earth. What a grand, great symbol ! Here is this little temple, but the whole Universe is a temple; a man can worship anywhere. There are the peculiar figures that men draw on the earth, and there are the altars, but here is the greatest of altars, the living, conscious human body, and to worship at this altar is far higher than the worship of any dead symbols."

We now come to a peculiar doctrine I do not understand much of it myself. If you can make something out of it, I will read it to you. When a man dies, who has by meditation purified himself, and got knowledge, he first goes to light, then from light to day, from day to the light half of the moon, from that to the six months when the sun goes to the north, from that to the year, from the year to the sun from the sun to the moon, from the moon to the lightning, and when he comes to the sphere of lightning he meets a person who is not human, and that person leads him to (the conditioned) Brahman. This is the way of the gods. When sages and wise persons die they go that way and they do not return What is meant by this month and year, and all these things, no one understands clearly. Each one gives his own meaning, and some say it is all nonsense. What is meant by going to the world of the moon, and of the sun, and this person who comes to help the soul after it has reached the sphere of lightning, no one knows. There is an idea among the Hindus that the moon is a place where life exists, and we shall see how life has come from there. Those that have not attained to knowledge, but have done good work in this life, when they die, first go through smoke, then to night, then to the dark fifteen day, then to the six months when the sun goes to the south, and from that they go to the region of their forefathers, then to ether, then to the region of the moon, and there become the food of the gods,

and later, are born as gods and live there so long as their good works will permit. And when the effect of the good work has been finished they come back to earth by the same route. They first become ether, and then air, and then smoke, and then mist, then cloud, and then fall upon the earth as raindrops; then they get into food, which is eaten up by human beings, and finally become their children. Those whose works have been very good take birth in good families, and those whose works have been bad births, even in animal bodies. Animals are continually coming to and going from this earth. That is why the earth is neither full, nor empty.

Several ideas we can get also from this, and later on, perhaps, we shall be able to understand it better, and we can speculate a little upon what it means The last part which deals with how those who have been in heaven return, is clearer perhaps than the first part, but the whole idea seems to be this, that there is no permanent heaven without realising God. Now some people who have not realised God, but have done good work in this world, with the view of enjoying the results, when they die, go through this and that place, until they reach heaven, and there they are born in the same way as we are here, as children of the gods, and they live there as long as their good works will permit. Out of this comes one basic idea of the Vedanta, that everything which has name and form is transient. This earth is transient, because it has name and form, and so the heavens must be transient, because there also name and form remain. A heaven which is eternal will be contradictory in terms, because everything that has name and form must begin in time, exist in time, and end in time These are settled doctrines of the Vedanta, and as such the heavens are given up.

We have seen in the Samhita that the idea of heaven was that it was eternal, much the same as is prevalent among Mohammedans and Christians The Mohammedans concretise it a little more They say it is a place where there are gardens, beneath which rivers run In the desert of Arabia water is very desirable, so the Mohammedan always conceives of his heaven as containing much water. I was born in a country where there are six months of rain every year. I should think of heaven, I suppose, as a dry place, and so also would the English people. These heavens in the Samhita are eternal, and the departed have beautiful

bodies and live with their forefathers, and are happy ever afterwards. There they meet with their parents, children, and other relatives, and lead very much the same sort of life as here, only much the same sort of life as here, only much happier. All the difficulties and obstructions to happiness in this life have vanished, and only its good parts and enjoyments remain. But however comfortable mankind may consider this state of things, truth is one thing and comfort is another. There are cases where truth is not comfortable until we reach its climax. Human nature is very conservative. It does something, and having once done that, finds it hard to get out of it. The mind will not receive new thoughts, because they being discomfort.

In the Upanishads, we see a tremendous departure made. It is declared that these heavens, in which men live with the ancestors after death, cannot be permanent, seeing that everything which has name and form must die. If there are heavens with forms, these heavens must vanish in course of time; they may last millions of years, but there must come a time when they will have to go. With this idea came another, that these souls must come back to earth, and that heavens are places where they enjoy the result of their good works, and after these effects are finished they come back into this earth life again. One thing is clear from this, that mankind had a perception of the philosophy of causation even at the early time. Later on we shall see how our philosophers bring that out in the language of philosophy and logic, but here it is almost in the language of children. One thing you may remark in reading these books, that it is all internal perception. If you ask me if this can be practical, my answer is, it has been practical first, and philosophical next. You can see that first these things have been perceived and realised, and then written. This world spoke to the early thinkers; birds spoke to them, animals spoke to them, the sun and the moon spoke to them; and little by little they realised things, and got into the heart of nature; not by cogitation, not by the force of logic, not by picking the brains of others and making a big book, as is the fashion in modern times, not even as I do, by taking up one of their writings and making a long lecture, but by patient investigation and discovery, they found out the truth. Its essential method was practice, and so it must be always Religion is ever a practical science, and there never was nor will be any theological religion. It is practice first,

and knowledge afterwards. The idea that souls come back is already there. Those persons who do good work with the idea of a result, get it, but the result is not permanent. There we get idea of causation very beautifully put forward, that the effect is only commensurate with the cause. As the cause is, so the effect will be. The cause being finite, the effect must be finite. If the cause is eternal the effect can be eternal, but all these causes, doing good work, and all other things, are only finite causes, and as such cannot produce infinite result.

We now come to the other side of the question. As there cannot be an eternal heaven, on the same grounds there cannot be an eternal hell. Suppose I am a very wicked man, doing evil every minute of my life. Still, my whole life here, compared with my eternal life, is nothing. If there be an eternal punishment it will mean that there is an infinite effect produced by a finite cause, which cannot be. If I do good all my life I cannot have an infinite heaven; it would be making the same mistake. But there is a third course which applies to those who have known the Truth, to those who have realised it. This is the only way to get beyond this veil of Maya,—to realise what Truth is, and the Upanishads indicate what is meant by realising the Truth.

It means recognising neither good nor bad, but knowing all as coming from the Self; Self is in everything. It means denying the universe; shutting your eyes to it; seeing the Lord in hell as well as in heaven; seeing the Lord in death as well as in life. This is the line of thought in the passage I have read to you; the earth is a symbol of the Lord, the sky is the Lord, the place we fill is the Lord, everything is Brahman. And this is to be seen, realised, not simply talked or thought about. We can see as its logical consequence that when the soul has realised that everything is full of the Lord, of Brahman, it will not care whether it goes to heaven or hell, or anywhere else; whether it be born again on this earth or in heaven. These things have ceased to have any meaning to that soul, because every place is the same, every place is the temple of the Lord, every place has become holy, and the presence of the Lord is all that it sees in heaven, or hell, or anywhere else. Neither good nor bad, neither life nor death; only the one infinite Brahman exists.

According to the Vedanta, when a man has arrived at that perception, he has become free, and he is the only man who is fit

to live in this world Others are not. The man who sees evil, how can he live in this world ? His life is a mass of misery. The man who sees dangers, his life is a misery; the who sees death, his life is a misery. That man alone can live in this world; he alone can say; 'I enjoy this life, and I am happy in this life,' who has seen the Truth, and the Truth in everything. By the bye, I may tell you that the idea of hell does not occur in the Vedas anywhere. It comes with the Puranas, much later. The worst punishment according to the Vedas, is coming back to earth, having another chance in this world. From the very first we see the idea is taking the impersonal turn The ideas of punishment and reward are very material, and they are only consonant with the idea of a human God, who loves one and hates another, just as we do. Punishment and reward are only admissible with the existence of such a God. They had such a God in the Samhita, and there we find the idea of fear entering, but as soon as we come to the Upanishads, the idea of fear vanishes, and the impersonal idea takes its place. It is naturally the hardest thing for man to understand, this impersonal idea, for he is always clinging on to the persons. Even people who are thought to be great thinkers, get disgusted at the idea of the Impersonal God. But to me it seems so absurd, to think of God as an embodied man. Which is the higher idea, a living God, or a dead God ? A God whom nobody sees, nobody knows, or God known ?

The Impersonal God is a living God, a principle. The difference between personal and impersonal is this, that the personal is only a man, and the impersonal idea is that He is the angel, the man, the animal, and yet something more which we cannot see, because Impersonality includes all personalities, is the sum-total of everything in the universe, and infinitely more besides. "As the one fire coming into the world is manifesting itself in so many forms, and yet is infinitely more besides," so is the Impersonal.

We want to worship a living God. I have seen nothing but God all my life, nor have you. To see this chair you first see God, and then the chair, in and through Him. He is everywhere, saying "I am." The moment you feel "I am," you are conscious of Existence. Where shall we go to find God if we cannot see Him in our own hearts, and in every living being ? "Thou art

the man. Thou art the woman, Thou art the girl, and Thou art the boy. Thou art the old man tottering with a stick. Thou art the young man walking in the pride of his strength." Thou art all that exists, a wonderful living God who is the only fact in the universe. This seems to many to be a terrible contradiction to the traditional God, who lives behind a veil somewhere and whom nobody ever sees. The priests only give us an assurance that if we follow them, listen to their admonitions, and walk in the way they mark out for us—then when we die, they will give us a passport, to enable us to see the face of God ! What are all these heaven ideas but simply modifications of this nonsensical priestcraft ?

Of course, the Impersonal idea is very destructive; it takes away all trade from the priests, churches and temples. In India, there is a famine now, but there are temples in each one of which there are jewels worth a king's ransom ! If the priests taught this impersonal idea to the people, their occupation would be gone. Yet we have to teach it unselfishly, without priestcraft. You are God and so am I; who obeys whom ? Who worships whom ? You are the highest temple of God; I would rather worship you than any temple, image, or Bible. Why are some people so contradictory in their thought ? They are like fish slipping through our fingers. They say they are hard-headed practical men. Very good. But what is more practical than worshipping here, worshipping you ? I see you, feel you, and I know you are God. The Mahommedan says, there is no God but Allah. The Vedanta says, there is nothing that is not God. It may frighten many of you, but you will understand it by degree. The living God is within you, and yet you are building churches and temples and believing all sorts of imaginary nonsense. The only God to worship is the human soul, in the human body. Of course, all animals are temples too, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of temples. If I cannot worship in that, no other temple will be of any advantage. The moment I have realised God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every human being and see God in him,—that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.

This is the most practical of all worship. It has nothing to do with theorising and speculation, yet, it frightens many. They

say it is not right. They go on theorising about old ideals told them by their grandfathers, that a God somewhere in heaven had told someone that he was God. Since that time we have only theories. This is practicality according to them, and our ideas are impractical ! No doubt, the Vedanta says that each one must have his own path, but the path is not the goal. The worship of a God in heaven, and all these things, are not bad, but they are only steps towards the Truth, and not the Truth itself. They are good and beautiful, and some wonderful ideas are there, but the Vedanta says at every point, "My friend, Him whom you are worshipping as unknown, I worship as thee. Whom you are worshipping as unknown and are seeking for, thoughout the universe, He has been with you all the time. You are living through Him, and He is the Eternal Witness of the universe." "He whom all the Vedas worship, nay, more, He who is always present in the eternal 'I', He existing, the whole universe exists. He is the light and life of the universe. If the 'I' were not in you, you would not see the sun, everything would be a dark mass. He shining, you see the world."

One question is generally asked and it is this, that this may lead to a tremendous amount of difficulty. Everyone of us will think, "I am God, and whatever I do or think must be good, for God can do no evil." In the first place, even taking this danger of misinterpretation for granted, can it be proved that on the other side the same danger does not exist ? They have been worshipping a God in heaven separate from them, and of whom they are much afraid. They have been born shaking with fear, and all their life they will go on shaking. Has the world been made much better by this ? Those who have understood and worshipped a Personal God, and those who have understood and worshipped an Impersonal God, on which side have been the great workers of the world ? Gigantic workers, gigantic moral powers ? Certainly on the Impersonal How can you expect morality to be developed though fear ? It can never be. "Where one sees another, where one hurts another, that is Maya. When one does not see another, when one does not hurt another, when everything has become the Atman, who sees whom, who perceive whom ?" It is all He, and all I, at the same time. The soul has become pure. Then, and then alone we understand what love is. Love cannot come through fear, its basis is freedom. When we

really begin to love the world, then we understand what is meant by brotherhood and mankind, and not before.

So, it is not right to say that the Impersonal idea will lead to a tremendous amount of evil in the world, as if the other doctrine never lent itself to works of evil; as if it did not lead to sectarianism deluging the world with blood and causing men to tear each other to pieces. "My God is the greatest God, let us decide it by a free fight." That is the outcome of dualism all over the world. Come out into the broad open light of day, come out from the little narrow paths, for how can the infinite soul rest content to live and die in small ruts ? Come out into the Universe of Light. Everything in the universe is yours, stretch out your arms and embrace it with love. If you ever felt you wanted to do that, you have felt God.

You remember that passage in the sermon of Buddha, how he sent a thought of love towards the south, the north, the east, and the west, above and below, until the whole universe was filled with this love, so grand, great and infinite. When you have that feeling you have true personality. The whole universe is one person; let go the little things. Give up the small for the Infinite, give up small enjoyments for infinite bliss. It is all yours, for the Impersonal includes the personal. So God is Personal and Impersonal at the same time. And Man, the Infinite, Impersonal Man, is manifesting Himself as person. We the infinite have limited ourselves, as it were, into small parts. The Vedanta says that Infinity is our true nature; it will never vanish, it will abide for ever. But we are limiting ourselves by our Karma, which like a chain round our necks has dragged up into this limitation. Break that chain and be free. Trample law under your feet. There is no law in human nature, there is no destiny, no fate. How can there be law in infinity ? Freedom is its watchword. Freedom is its nature, its birthright. Be free, and then have any number of personalities you like. Then we will play like the actor who comes upon the state and plays the part of a beggar. Contrast him with the actual beggar walking in the streets. The scene is perhaps the same in both cases, the words are perhaps the same, but yet what a difference ! The one enjoys his beggary while the other is suffering misery from it. And what makes this difference ? The one is free and the other is bound. The actor knows his beggary is not true, but that he has assumed it, for

play, while the real beggar thinks that it is his too familiar state and that he has to bear it whether he will or not. This is the law. So long as we have no knowledge of our real nature, we are beggars, jostled about by every force in nature, and made slaves of by everything in nature, we cry all over the world for help, but help never comes to us; we cry to imaginary beings, and yet it never comes But still we hope help will come, and thus in weeping, wailing and hoping, one life is passed and the same play goes on and on.

Be free; hope for nothing from any one. I am sure if you look back upon your lives you will find that you were always vainly trying to get help from others which never came. All the help that has come was from within yourselves. You only had the fruits of what you yourselves worked for, and yet you were strangely hoping all the time for help. A rich man's parlour is always full, but if you notice you do not find the same people there. The visitors are always hoping that they will get something from those wealthy men, but they never do. So are our lives spent in hoping, hoping, hoping, which never comes to an end. Give up hope, says the Vedanta. Why should you hope? You *have* everything, nay, you are everything. What are you hoping for? If a king goes mad, runs about trying to find the king of his country, he will never find him, because he is the king himself. He may go through every village and city in his own country, seeking in every house, weeping and wailing, but he will never find him, because he is the king himself. It is better that we know we are God and give up this fool's search after Him; and knowing that we are God we become happy and contented. Give up all these mad pursuits, and then play your part in the Universe, as an actor on the stage.

The whole vision is changed, and instead of an eternal prison this world has become a playground; instead of a land of competition it is a land of bliss, where there is perpetual spring, flowers bloom and butterflies flit about. This very world becomes heaven, which formerly was hell. To the eyes of the bound it is a tremendous place of torment, but to the eyes of the free it is quite otherwise. This one life is the Universal Life, heavens and all those places are here. All the gods are here, the prototypes of man. The gods did not create man after their type, but man created gods. And here are the prototypes, here is the India,

here is Varuna, and all the gods of the universe. We have been projecting our little doubles, and we are the originals of these gods, we are the real, the only gods to be worshipped. This is the view of the Vedanta, and this its practicality. When we have become free, we need not go mad and throw up society and rush off to die in the forest or the cave; we shall remain where we were, only we shall understand the whole thing. The same phenomena will remain, but with a new meaning. We do not know the world yet; it is only through freedom that we see what it is, and understand its nature. We shall see then that this so-called law, or fate, or destiny, occupied only an infinitesimal part of our nature. It was only one side, but on the other side there was freedom all the time, we did not know this, and that is why we have been trying to save ourselves from evil by hiding our faces in the ground, like the hunted hare. Through delusion we have been trying to forget our nature, and yet we could not; it was always calling upon us, and all our search after God or gods, or external freedom, was a search after our real nature. We mistook the voice. We thought it was from the fire, or from a god or the sun, or moon, or stars, but at last we have found that it was from within ourselves. Within ourselves is this eternal voice speaking of eternal freedom; its music is eternally going on. Part of this music of the Soul has become the earth, the law, this universe, but it was always ours and always will be. In one word, the ideal of Vedanta is to know man as he really is, and this is its message, that if you cannot worship your brother man, the manifested God, how can you worship of God who is unmanifested ?

Do you not remember what the Bible says : "If you cannot love your brother whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you have not seen ?" If you cannot see God in the human face, how can you see Him in the clouds, or in images made of dull, dead matter, or in mere fictitious stories of your brain ? I shall call you religious, from the day you begin to see God in men and women, and then you will understand what is meant by turning the left cheek to the man who strikes you on the right. When you see man as God, everything, even the tiger, will be welcome. Whatever comes to you is but the Lord, the Eternal, the Blessed One, appearing to us in various forms, as our father, and mother, and friend and child; they are our own soul playing with us.

As our human relationships can thus be made divine, so our relationship with God may take any of these forms, and we can look upon Him as our father or mother or friend or beloved. Calling God Mother is a higher ideal than calling Him Father, and to call Him Friend is still higher, but the highest is to regard Him as the Beloved. The highest point of all is to see no difference between lover and beloved. You may remember, perhaps, the old Persian story, of how a lover came and knocked at the door of the beloved and was asked, "Who are you ?" He answered. "It is I," and there was no response A second time he came, and exclaimed, "I am here," but the door was not opened. The third time he came, and the voice asked from inside, "Who is there ?" He replied, "I am thyself, my beloved," and the door opened. So is the relation between God and ourselves. He is in everything, He is everything Every man and woman is the palpable, blissful, living God. Who says God is unknown ? Who says He is to be searched after ? We have found God eternally. We have living in Him eternally. Everywhere He is eternally known, eternally worshipped.

Then comes another idea, that other forms of worship are not errors. This is one of the great points to be remembered, that those who worship God through ceremonials and forms however crude we many think them, are not in error. It is the journey from truth, from lower truth to higher truth. Darkness is less light; evil is less good; impurity is less purity. It must always be borne in mind that we should see others with eyes of love, with sympathy, knowing that they are going along the same path that we have trod. If you are free, you must know that all will be so sooner or later, and if you are free, how can you see the impermanent ? If you are really pure, how do you see the impure ? For what is within, is without. We cannot see impurity without having it inside ourselves. This is one of the practical sides of Vedanta, and I hope that we shall all try to carry it into our lives. Our whole life here is to carry this into practice, but the one great point we gain is, that we shall work with satisfaction and contentment, instead of with discontent and dissatisfaction, for we know that Truth is within us, we have It as our birthright, and we have only to manifest It, and make It tangible.

PART III

In the Chhandogya Upanishad we read that a sage called Narada came to another called Sanatkumara, and asked him various questions, of which one was, if religion was the cause of things as they are. And Sanatkumara leads him, as it were, step by step, telling him that there is something higher than this earth and something higher than that, and so on, till he comes to Akasa, ether. Ether is higher than light, because in the ether are the sun and the moon, lighting, and the stars; in ether we live, and the ether we die. Then the question arises, if there is anything higher than that, and Sanatkumara tells him of Prana. This Prana, according to the Vedanta, is the principle of life. It is like ether an omnipresent principle; and all motion either in the body or anywhere else, is the work of this Prana. It is greater than Akasa, and through it everything lives. Prana is in the mother, in the father, in the sister, in the teacher, Prana is the knower.

I will read another passage, where Svetaketu asks his father about the Truth, and the father teaches him different things, and concludes by saying, "That which is the fine cause in all these things, of It are all these things made. That is the All, that is Truth, thou art That, O Svetaketu " And then he gives various examples. "As a bee, O Svetaketu, gathers honey from different flowers, and the different honeys do not know that they are from various trees, and from various flowers, so all of us, having come to that existence, know not that we have done so. Now, That which is that subtle essence, in It all that exists has its Self. It is the True. It is the Self and thou, O Svetaketu, art That." He gives another example of the rivers running down to the ocean. "As the rivers when they are in the ocean do not know that they have been various rivers, so even when we come out of that Existence, we do not know that we are That. O Svetaketu, thou art That." So on he goes with his teachings.

Now there are two principles of knowledge. The one principle is that we can know by referring the particular to the general, and the general to the universal; and the second is that anything of which the explanation is sought, is to be explained so far as possible from its own nature. Taking up the first principle, we see

*Speech delivered in London, 17th November, 1896.

that all our knowledge really consists of classifications, going higher and higher. When something happens singly, we are, as it were, dissatisfied. When it can be shown that the same thing happens again and again we are satisfied, and call it law. When we find that one apple falls, we are dissatisfied; but when we find that all apples fall we call it the law of gravitation and are satisfied. The fact is that from the particular we deduce the general.

When we want to study religion, we should apply this scientific process. The same principle also holds good here; and as a fact we find that that has been the method all through. In reading these books from which I have been translating to you, the earliest idea that I can trace, is this principle of going from the particular to the general We see how the "bright ones" became merged into one principle; and likewise in the ideas of the cosmos we find the ancient thinkers going higher and higher,—from the fine elements they go to finer and more embracing elements, and from these particulars they come to one omnipresent ether; and from that even they go to an all-embracing force, or Prana; and through all this runs the principle, that one is not separate from the others. It is the very ether that exists in the higher form of Prana, or the higher form of Prana concretes, so as to say, and becomes ether and that ether becomes still grosser, and so on.

The generalisation of the Personal God is another case in point. We have seen how this generalisation was reached, and that it was called the sum-total of all consciousness. But a difficulty arises; it is an incomplete generalisation. We take up only one side of the facts of nature, the fact of consciousness, and upon that we generalise, but the other side is left out. So, in the first place it is a defective generalisation. There is another insufficiency, and that relates to the second principle Everything should be explained from its own nature. There may have been people who thought that every apple that fell to the ground was dragged down by a ghost, but the explanation is the law of gravitation; and although we know it is not a perfect explanation, yet it is much better than the other, because it is derived from the nature of the thing itself, while the other posits an extraneous cause So throughout the whole range of our knowledge, the explanation which is based upon the nature of the thing itself is a scientific explanation, and an explanation which brings in an outside agent

is unscientific

So the explanation of a Personal God as the Creator of the universe has to stand that test. If that God is outside of nature, having nothing to do with nature, and this nature is the outcome of the command of that God and produced from nothing, it is a very unscientific theory, and this has been the weak point of every Theistic religion throughout the ages These two defects we find in what is generally called the theory of monotheism, the theory of a Personal God, with all the qualities of a human being multiplied very much, who, by His will, created this universe out of nothing and yet is separate from it. This leads us into two difficulties.

As we have seen, it is not a sufficient generalisation, and secondly, it is not an explanation of nature from nature. It holds that the effect is not the cause, that the cause is entirely separate from the effect. Yet all human knowledge shows that the effect is but the cause in another form. To this idea the discoveries of modern science are tending every day, and the latest theory that has been accepted on all sides is the theory of evolution, the principle of which is, that the effect is but the cause in another form, a readjustment of the cause, and the cause takes the form of the effect. The theory of creation out of nothing would be laughed at by modern scientists.

Now, can religion stand these tests ? If there be any religious theories which can stand these two tests, they will be acceptable to the modern mind, to the thinking mind. Any other theory which we ask the modern man to believe, on the authority of priests, or churches or books, he is unable to accept, and the result is a hideous mass of unbelief. Even in those in whom there is an external display of belief, in their hearts there is a tremendous amount of unbelief. The rest shrink away from religion, as it were, give it up regarding it as priestcraft only.

Religion has been reduced to a sort of national form. It is one of our very best social remnants; let it remain. But the real necessity which the grandfather of the modern man felt for it, is gone; he no longer finds it satisfactory to his reason. The idea of such a personal God, and such a creation, the idea which is generally known as monotheism in every religion, cannot hold its own any longer. In India, it could not hold its own because of the Buddhists, and that was the very point where they gained their

victory in ancient times. They showed that if we allow that nature is possessed of infinite power, and that nature can work out all its wants, it is simply unnecessary to insist that there is something besides nature. Even the soul is unnecessary.

The discussion about substance and qualities is very old, and you will sometimes find that the old superstition lives even at the present day. Most of you have read how, during the middle ages, and, I am sorry to say, even much later, this was one of the subjects of discussion, whether qualities adhered to substance, whether length, breadth and thickness adhered to the substance which we call dead matter, the substance remaining whether the qualities are there or not. To this our Buddhist says, "You have no ground for maintaining the existence of such a substance; the qualities are all that exist; you do not see beyond them." This is just the position of most of our modern agnostics. For, it is this fight of the substance and qualities that, on a higher plane, takes the form of the fight between noumenon and phenomenon. There is the phenomenal world, the universe of continuous change, and there is something behind which does not change, and this duality of existence, noumenon and phenomenon, some hold, is true, and others with better reason claim that you have no right to admit the two, for what we see, feel, and think is only the phenomenon. You have no right to assert there is anything beyond phenomenon; and there is no answer to this. The only answer we get is from the monistic theory of the Vedanta. It is true that only one exists, and that one is either phenomenon or noumenon. It is not true that there are two, something changing, but it is the one and the same thing which appears as changing, and which is in reality unchangeable. We have come to think of the body, and mind, and soul as many, but really there is only one; and that one is appearing in all these various forms. Take the well-known illustration of the Monists, the rope appearing as the snake. Some people, in the dark or through some other cause, mistake the rope for the snake, but when knowledge comes, the snake vanishes and it is found to be a rope. By this illustration we see that when the snake exists in the mind, the rope has vanished, and when the rope exists, the snake has gone. When we see phenomenon, and phenomenon only around us, the noumenon has vanished, but when we see the noumenon, the unchangeable, it naturally follows that the phenomenon has vanished. Now, we understand better

the position of both the realist and the idealist. The realist sees the phenomenon only, and the idealist looks to the noumenon. For the idealist, the really genuine idealist, who has truly arrived at the power of perception, whereby he can get away from all ideas of change, for him the changeful universe has vanished, and he has the right to say it is all delusion, there is no change. The realist at the same time looks at the changeful. For him the unchangeable has vanished, and he has a right to say this is all real.

What is the outcome of this philosophy ? It is that the idea of personal God is not sufficient. We have to get to something higher, to the impersonal idea. It is the only logical step that we can take. Not that the personal idea would be destroyed by that, not that we supply profit that the Personal God does not exist, but we must go to the Impersonal for the explanation of the personal, for the Impersonal is a much higher generalisation than the personal. The Impersonal only can be Infinite, the personal is limited. Thus we preserve the personal and do not destroy it. Often the doubt comes to us that if we arrive at the idea of the Impersonal God the personal will be destroyed, if we arrive at the idea of the Impersonal man the personal will be lost. But the Vedantic idea is not the destruction of the individual, but its real preservation. We cannot prove the individual by any other means but by referring to the universal, by proving that this individual is really the universal. If we think of the individual as separate from everything else in the Universe, it cannot stand a minute. Such a thing never existed.

Secondly, by the application of the second principle that the explanation of everything must come out of the nature of the thing, we are led to a still bolder idea, and one more difficult to understand. It is nothing less than this, that the Impersonal Being, our highest generalisation, is in ourselves, and we are That, "O Svetaketu, thou art That." You are that Impersonal Being; that God for whom you have been searching all over the Universe is all the time yourself,—yourself not in the personal sense but in the impersonal. The man we know now, the manifested, is personalised, but the reality of this is the Impersonal. To understand the personal we have to refer it to the Impersonal, the particular must be referred to the general, and the Impersonal is the Truth, the Self of man.

There will be various questions in connection with this, and I shall try to answer them as we go on. Many difficulties will arise, but first let us clearly understand the position of Monism. As manifested beings we appear to be separate, but our reality is one, and the less we think of ourselves as separate from that One, the better for us. The more we think of ourselves as separate from the Whole, the more miserable we become. From the Monistic principle we get at the basis of ethics, and I venture to say that we cannot get any ethics from anywhere else. We know that the oldest idea of ethics was the will of some particular being or beings, but few are ready to accept that now, because it would be only a partial generalisation. The Hindus say we must not do this or that because the Vedas say so, but the Christian is not going to obey the authority of the Vedas. The Christian says you must do this and not do that because the Bible says so. That will not be binding on those who do not believe in the Bible. But we must have a theory which is large enough to take in all these various grounds. Just as there are millions of people who are ready to believe in a personal Creator, there have also been thousands of the brightest minds in the world who felt that such ideas were not sufficient for them, and wanted something higher, and wherever religion was not broad enough to include all these minds the result was, that the brightest minds in society were always outside of religion; and never was this so marked as at the present time, especially in Europe

To include these minds, therefore, religion must become broad enough Everything it claims must be judged from the standpoint of reason. Why religions should claim that they are not bound to abide by the standpoint of reason, no one knows If one does not take the standard of reason there cannot be any true judgment, even in the case of religions One religion may ordain something very hideous. For instance, the Mohammedan religion allows Mohammedans to kill all who are not of their religion It is clearly stated in the Koran, "Kill the infields if they do not become Mohammedans." They must be put to fire and sword Now if we tell a Mohammedan that this is wrong, he will naturally ask : "How do you know that ? How do you know it is not good ? My book says it is." If you say your book is older, there will come the Buddhist, and say, my book is much older still. Then will come the Hindu, and say, my books are the oldest of

all. Therefore, referring to books will not do. Where is the standard by which you can compare ? You will say, look at the Sermon on the Mount, and the Mohammedan will reply, look at the Ethics of the Koran. The Mohammedan will say, who is the arbiter as to which is the better of the two ? Neither the New Testament nor the Koran can be the arbiter in a quarrel between them. There must be some independent authority, and that cannot be any book, but something which is universal; and what is more universal than reason ? It has been said that reason is not strong enough; it does not always help us to get the Truth; many times it makes mistakes, and therefore the conclusion is, that we must believe in the authority of a church ! That was said to n e by a Roman Catholic, but I could not see the logic of it. On the other hand, I should say, if reason be so weak, a body of priests would be weaker, and I am not going to accept their verdict, but I will abide by my reason, because with all its weakness there is some chance of my getting at truth through it; while, by the other means, there is no such hope at all

We should therefore follow reason, and also sympathise with those who do not come to any sort of belief, following reason For it is better that mankind should become atheist by following reason than blindly believe in two hundred millions of gods on the authority of anybody. What we want is progress, development, realisation. No theories ever made men higher. No amount of books can help us to become purer. The only power is in realisation, and that lies in ourselves and comes from thinking. Let men think. A clod of earth never thinks, but it remains only a lump of earth. The glory of man is that he is a thinking being. It is the nature of man to think and therein he differs from animals. I believe in reason and follow reason, having seen enough of the evils of authority, for I was born in a country where they have gone to the extreme of authority.

The Hindus believe that creation has come out of the Vedas. How do you know there is a cow ? Because the word cow is in the Vedas. How do you know there is a man outside ? Because the word man is there. If it had not been, there would have been no man outside. That is what they say. Authority with a vengeance ! And it is not studied as I have studied it, but some of the most powerful minds have taken it up and spun out wonderful logical theories round it. They have reasoned it out and there it

stands, a whole system of philosophy, and thousands of the brightest intellects have been dedicated through thousands of years to the working out of this theory. Such has been the power of authority and great are the dangers thereof. It stunts the growth of humanity, and we must not forget that we want growth. Even in all relative truth, more than the truth itself, we want the exercise. That is our life.

The Monistic theory has this merit, that it is the most national of all the religious theories that we can conceive of. Every other theory, every conception of God which is partial and little and personal is not rational. And yet Monism has this grandeur that it embraces all these partial conceptions of God as being necessary for many. Some people say that this personal explanation is irrational. But it is consoling; they want a consoling religion and we understand that it is necessary for them. The clear light of truth very few in this life can bear, much less live up to. It is necessary, therefore, that this comfortable religion should exist, it helps many souls to a better one. Small minds whose circumference is very limited and which require little things to build them up, never venture to soar high in thought. Their conceptions are very good and helpful to them, even if only of little gods and symbols. But you have to understand the Impersonal, for it is in and through that alone that these others can be explained. Take, for instance, the idea of a Personal God. A man who understands and believes in the Impersonal—John Stuart Mill, for example—may say that a Personal God is impossible, and cannot be proved. I admit with him that a Personal God cannot be demonstrated. But He is the highest reading of the Impersonal that can be reached by the human intellect, and what else is the universe but various readings of the Absolute ? It is a like a book before us, and each one has brought his intellect to read it, and each one has to read it for himself. There is something which is common in the intellect of all men; therefore, certain things appear to be the same to the intellect of mankind. That you and I see a chair proves that there is something common to both our minds. Suppose a being comes with another sense; he will not see the chair at all, but all beings similarly constituted will see the same things. Thus, this universe itself is the Absolute, the unchangeable, the noumenon, and the phenomenon constitutes the reading thereof. For you will first find that all phenomena are finite. Every phenomenon that we can

see, feel, or think of, is finite, limited by our knowledge, and the Personal God as we conceive of Him, is in fact a phenomenon. The very idea of causation exists only in the phenomenal world, and God as the cause of this universe, must naturally be thought of as limited, and yet He is the same Impersonal God. This very universe, as we have seen, is the same Impersonal Being read by our intellect. Whatever is reality in the universe is that Impersonal Being, and the forms and conceptions are given to it by our intellects. Whatever is real in this table is that Being, and the table form and all other forms are given by our intellects.

Now, motion, for instance, which is a necessary adjunct of the phenomenal, cannot be predicated of the Universal. Every little bit, every atom inside the universe, is in a constant state of change and motion, but the Universe as a whole is unchangeable, because motion or change is a relative thing; we can only think of something in motion in comparison to something which is not moving. There must be two things in order to understand motion. The whole mass of the universe, taken as a unit, cannot move. I regard to what will it move ? It cannot be said to change. With regard to what will it change ? So the whole is the Absolute; but within It every particle is in a constant state of flux and change. It is unchangeable and changeable at the same time, Impersonal and personal in one. This is our conception of the Universe, of motion and of God, and that is what is meant by "Thou art That." Thus, we see that the Impersonal instead of doing away with the personal, the Absolute instead of pulling down the relative, only explains it to the full satisfaction of our reason and heart. The personal God and all that exists in the universe are the same Impersonal Being seen through our minds. When we shall be rid of our minds, our little personalities, we shall become one with it. This is what is meant by "Thou art That." For we must know our true nature, the Absolute.

The finite, manifested man forgets his source and thinks himself to be entirely separate. We, as personalised; differentiated beings, forget our reality, and the teaching of Monism is not that we shall give up these differentiations, but we must learn to understand what they are. We are in reality that Infinite Being, and our personalities represent so many channels through which this Infinite Reality is manifesting Itself; and the whole mass of changes which we call evolution is brought about by the soul trying to

manifest more and more of its infinite energy. We cannot stop anywhere on this side of the Infinite; our power, and blessedness, and wisdom, cannot but grow into the Infinite. Infinite power and existence and blessedness are ours, and we have not to acquire them; they are our own, and we have only to manifest them.

This is the central idea of Monism, and one that is so hard to understand. From my childhood everyone around me taught weakness, I have been told ever since I was born that I was a weak thing. It is very difficult for me now to realise my own strength, but by analysis and reasoning I gain knowledge of my own strength, I realise it. All the knowledge that we have in this world, where did it come from ? It was within us. What knowledge is outside ? None. Knowledge was not in matter, it was in man all the time. Nobody ever created knowledge; man brings it from within. It is lying there. The whole of that big banyan tree which covers acres of ground, was in the little seed which was perhaps no bigger than one-eighth of a mustard seed; all that mass of energy was there confined. The gigantic intellect, we know, lies coiled up in the protoplasmic cell, and why should not the infinite energy ? We know that it is so. It may seem like a paradox, but it is true. Each one of us has come out of one protoplasmic cell, and all the powers we possess were coiled up there. You cannot say they came from food; for if you heap up food mountains high, what power comes out of it ? The energy was there potentially no doubt, but still there. So is infinite power in the soul of man, whether he knows it or not. Its manifestation is only a question of being conscious of it. Slowly this infinite giant is, as it were, waking up, becoming conscious of his power, and arousing himself; and with his growing consciousness, more and more of his bonds are breaking, chains are bursting asunder, and the day is sure to come, when with the full consciousness of his infinite power and wisdom, the giant will rise to his feet and stand erect. Let us all help to hasten that glorious consummation.

PART IV*

We have been dealing more with the universal, so far. This morning I shall try to place before you the Vedantic ideas of the

*Speech delivered in London, 18th November, 1896.

relation of the particular to the universal. As we have seen, in the Dualistic form of Vedic doctrines, the earlier forms, there was a clearly defined particular and limited soul for every being. There have been a great many theories about this particular soul in each individual, but the main discussion was between the ancient Vedantists, and that the ancient Buddhists, the former believing in the individual soul complete in itself, the latter denying in *toto* the existence of such an individual soul. As I told you the other day, it is pretty much the same discussion you have in Europe as to substance and quality, one set holding that behind the qualities there is something as substance, in which the qualities inhere; and the other denying the existence of such a substance as being unnecessary, for the qualities may live by themselves. The most ancient theory of the soul, of course, is based upon the argument of self-identity—"I am I,"—that the I of yesterday is the I of today, and the I of today will be the I of tomorrow; that in spite of all the changes that are happening to the body, I yet believe that I am the same I. This seems to have been the central argument with those who believed in a limited, and yet perfectly complete, individual soul.

On the other hand, the ancient Buddhists denied the necessity of such an assumption. They brought forward the argument that all that we know, and all that we possibly can know, are simply these changes. The positing of an unchangeable and unchanging substance is simply superfluous, and even if there were any such unchangeable thing, we could never understand it, nor should we ever be able to cognise it in any sense of the word. The same discussion you will find at the present time going on in Europe between the religionists and the idealists on the one side, and the modern positivists and agnostics on the other; one set believing there is something which does not change (of whom the latest representative is your Herbert Spencer), that we catch a glimpse of something which is unchangeable. And the other is represented by the modern Comtists and modern Agnostics Those of you who were interested a few years ago in the discussions between Herbert Spencer and Frederick Harrison, might have noticed that it was the same old difficulty, the one party standing for a substance behind the changeful, and the other party denying the necessity for such an assumption. One party says, we cannot conceive of changes without conceiving of something which does

not change; the other party brings out the argument that this is superfluous, we can only conceive of something which is changing, and as to the unchanging, we can neither know, feel, nor sense it.

In India this great question did not find its solution in very ancient times, because we have seen that the assumption of a substance which is behind the qualities, and which is not the qualities, can never be substantiated; nay, even the argument from self-identity, from memory,—that I am the I of yesterday because I remember it, and therefore, I have been a continuous something—cannot be substantiated. The other quibble that is generally put forward is a mere delusion of words. For instance, a man may take a long series of such sentences as "I do," "I go," "I dream," "I sleep," "I move," and here you will find it claimed that the doing, going, dreaming, etc., have been changing, but what remained constant was that "I." As such they conclude that the "I" is something which is constant, and an individual in itself, but all these changes belong to the body. This, though apparently very convincing and clear, is based upon the mere play upon words. The "I" and the doing, going and dreaming, may be separate in black and white, but no one can separate them in his mind.

When I eat, I think of myself as eating—I am identified with eating. When I run, I and the running are not two separate things. Thus, the argument from personal identity does not seem to be very strong. The other argument, from monetary, is also weak. If the identity of my being is represented by my memory, many things which I have forgotten are lost from that identity. And we know that people under certain conditions forget their whole past. In many cases of lunacy a man will think of himself as made of glass, or as being an animal. If the existence of that man depends on memory, he has become glass, which not being the case we cannot make the identity of the self depend on such a flimsy substance as memory. Thus, we see that the soul as a limited, yet complete and continuing identity, cannot be established as separate from the qualities. We cannot establish a narrowed-down, limited existence to which is attached a bunch of qualities.

On the other hand, the argument of the ancient Buddhists seems to be stronger—that we do not know, and cannot know, anything that is beyond the bunch of qualities. According to them the soul consists of a bundle of qualities called sensations and

feelings. A mass of such is what is called the soul, and this mass is continually changing.

The Advaitist theory of the soul reconciles both these positions. The position of the Advaitist is, that it is true that we cannot think of the substance as separate from the qualities; we cannot think of change and not-change at the same time; it would be impossible. But the very thing which is the substance is the quality; substance and quality are not two things. It is the unchangeable that is appearing as the changeable. The unchangeable substance of the universe is not something separate from it. The noumenon is not something different from the phenomena, but it is the very noumenon which has become the phenomena. There is a soul which is unchanging and what we call feelings and perceptions, nay, even the body, are the very soul, seen from another point of view. We have got into the habit of thinking that we have bodies and souls and so forth, but really speaking, there is only one.

When I think of myself as the body, I am only a body; it is meaningless to say I am something else. And when I think of myself as the soul, the body vanishes, and the perception of body does not remain. None can get the perception of the Self without his perception of the body having vanished, none can get perception of the substance without his perception of the qualities having vanished.

The ancient illustration of Advaita of the rope being taken for a snake, may elucidate the point a little more. When a man mistakes the rope for a snake, the rope has vanished, and when he takes it for a rope, the snake has vanished, and the rope only remains. The ideas of dual or treble existence come from reasoning of insufficient data, and we read them in books or hear about them, until we come under the delusion that we really have a dual perception of the soul and the body; but such a perception never really exists. The perception is either of the body, or of the soul. It requires no arguments to prove it, you can verify it in your own minds.

Try to think of yourself as a soul, as a disembodied something. You will find it to be almost impossible, and those few who are able to do so will find that at the time when they realise themselves as a soul they have no idea of the body. You have heard of, or perhaps have seen, persons who no particular occasions had

been in peculiar states of mind, brought about by deep meditation, self-hypnotism, hysteria, or drugs. From their experience you may gather that when they were perceiving the internal something the external had vanished for them. This slows that whatever exists, is one. That One is appearing in these various forms, and all these various forms give rise to the relation of cause and effect. The relation of cause and effect is one of evolution—the one becomes the other, and so on Sometimes the cause vanishes, as it were, and in its place leaves the effect. If the soul is the cause of the body, the soul, as it were, vanishes for the time being, and the body remains, and when the body vanishes, the soul remains. This theory fits the arguments of the Buddhists, that were levelled against the assumption of the dualism of body and soul, by denying the quality, and showing that the substance and the qualities are one and the same thing, appearing in various forms.

We have seen also that this idea of the unchangeable can be established only as regards the whole, but never as regards the part. The very idea of part comes from the idea of change, or motion. Everything that is limited we can understand and know, because it is changeable, and the whole must be unchangeable, because there is no other thing besides it in relation to which change would be possible. Change is always in regard to something which does not change, or which changes relatively less.

According to Advaita, therefore, the idea of the soul, as universal, unchangeable and immortal, can be demonstrated as far as possible. The difficulty would be as regards the particular. What shall we do with the old dualistic theories which have such a hold upon us, and which we have all to pass through—these beliefs in limited, little, individual souls ?

We have seen that we are immoral with regard to the whole, but the difficulty is, we desire so much to be immortal as *parts* of the whole. We have seen that we are Infinite, and that is our real individuality. But we want so much to make these little souls individual. What becomes of them when we find in our everyday experience that these little souls are individuals, with only this reservation, that they are continuously growing individuals ? They are the same, yet not the same. The I of yesterday is the I of today, and yet not so, it is changed somewhat. Now, by getting rid of the dualistic conception, that in the midst of all these changes there is something that does not change, and taking

the most modern of conceptions, that of evolution, we find that the "I" is a continuously changing, expanding entity.

If it be true that man is the evolution of a mollusc, the mollusc individual is the same as the man, only it has to become expanded a great deal. From mollusc to man it has been a continuous expansion towards infinity. Therefore, the limited soul can be styled an individual which is continuously expanding towards the Infinite Individual. Perfect individuality will only be reached when it has reached the Infinite, but on this side of the Infinite it is a continuously changing, growing personality. One of the remarkable features of the Advaitist system of Vedanta is to harmonise the preceding systems. In many cases it helped the philosophy very much; in some cases it hurt it. Our ancient philosophers knew what you call the theory of evolution; that growth is gradual, step by step, and the recognition of this led them to harmonise all the preceding systems. Thus not one of these preceding ideas was rejected. The fault of the Buddhistic faith was that it had neither the faculty nor the perception of this continual, expansive growth, and for this reason it never even made an attempt to harmonise itself with the pre-existing steps towards the ideal. They were rejected as useless and harmful.

This tendency in religion is most harmful. A man gets a new and better idea, and then he looks back on those he has given up, and forthwith decides that they were mischievous and unnecessary. He never thinks that however crude they may appear from his present point of view, they were very useful to him, that they were necessary for him to reach his present state, and that everyone of us has to grow in similar fashion, living first on crude ideas, taking benefit from them, and then arriving at a higher standard. With the oldest theories, therefore, the Advaita is friendly. Dualism and all systems that had preceded it, are accepted by the Advaita not in a patronising way, but with the conviction that they are true, manifestations of the same truth, and that they all lead to the same conclusions as the Advaita has reached.

With blessing, and not with cursing, should be preserved all these various steps through which humanity has to pass. Therefore, all these dualistic systems have never been rejected or thrown out, but have been kept intact in the Vedanta, and the dualistic conception of an individual soul, limited, yet complete in itself,

finds its place in the Vedanta.

According to dualism man dies and goes to other worlds, and so forth, and these ideas are kept in the Vedanta in their entirety. For with the recognition of growth, in the Advaitist system, these theories are given their proper place, by admitting that they represent only a partial view of the Truth.

From the dualistic standpoint this universe can only be looked upon as a creation of matter or force, can only be looked upon as the play of a certain will, and that will, again, can only be looked upon as separate from the universe; thus a man from such a standpoint has to see himself as composed of a dual nature, body and soul, and this soul, though limited, is individually complete in itself. Such a man's ideas of immortality and of the future life would necessarily accord with his idea of soul. These phases have been kept in the Vedanta, and it is therefore necessary for me to present to you a few of the popular ideas of Dualism. According to this theory we have a body, of course, and behind the body there is what they call a fine body. This fine body is also made of matter, only very fine. It is the receptacle of all our *Karma*, of all our actions and impressions, which are ready to spring up, into visible forms. Every thought that we think, every deed that we do, after a certain time becomes fine, goes into seed form, so to speak, and lives in the fine body in a potential form, and after a time it emerges again and bears its results. These results condition the life of man. Thus he moulds his own life. Man is not bound by any other laws excepting those which he makes for himself. Our thoughts, our words, and deeds, are the threads of the net which we throw round ourselves, for good or for evil. Once we set in motion a certain power, we have to take the full consequences of it. This is the law of *Karma* Behind the subtle body, lives the Jiva, or individual soul of man. There are various discussions about the form and the size of this individual soul. According to some it is very small, like an atom; according to others it is not so small as that; according to others it is very big and so on. This Jiva is a part of that universal substance, and it is also eternal : without beginning, it is existing and without end, it will exist. It is passing through all these forms in order to manifest its real nature which is purity. Every action that retards this manifestation is called an evil action; so with thoughts. And every action and every thought that helps

the Jiva to expand, to manifest its real nature is good. One theory that is held in common in India by the crudest dualists as well as by the most advanced non-dualists is,—that all the possibilities and powers of the soul are within it, and do not come from any external source. They are in the soul in potential form, and the whole work of life is simply directed towards manifesting those potentialities.

They have also the theory of reincarnation, which says that after the dissolution of this, the Jiva will have another body, and after that has been dissolved, it will again have another, and so on, either here or in some other worlds; but this world is given the perference, as it is considered the best of all worlds for our purpose. Other worlds are conceived of as worlds where there is very little misery, but for that very reason, they argue, there is less chance of thinking of higher things there. This world containing some happiness and a good deal of misery, the Jiva sometime or other gets awakened, as it were, and thinks of freeing itself. But just as very rich persons in this world have the least chance of thinking of higher things; so the Jiva in heaven has little chance of progress, for its condition is the same as that of a rich man, only more intensified, it has a very fine body which knows no disease, and is under no necessity of eating, or drinking, and all its desires are fulfilled. The Jiva lives there, having enjoyment after enjoyment, and so forgets all about its real nature. Still there are some higher words, where inspite of all enjoyments, its further evolution is possible. Some dualists conceive of the goal as the highest heaven, where souls will live with God for ever. They will have beautiful bodies, and will know neither disease nor death, nor any other evil, and all their desires will be fulfilled. From time to time some of them will come back to this each and take another body to teach human beings the way to God; and the great teachers of the world have been such. They were already free, and were living with God in the highest sphere, but their love and sympathy for suffering humanity was so great that they came and incarnated again, to teach mankind the way to heaven.

Of course, we know that the Advaita holds that this cannot be the goal or the ideal; bodilessness must be the ideal. The ideal cannot be finite. Anything short of the Infinite cannot be the ideal and there cannot be an infinite body. That would be

impossible, as body comes from limitation. There cannot be infinite thought, because thought comes from limitation. We have to go beyond the body, and beyond thought too, says the Advaita. And we have also seen that, according to Advaita, this freedom is not to be attained, it *is* already ours. We only forget it and deny it. Perfection is not to be attained, it is already within us. Immortality and bliss are not to be acquired, we possess them already; they have been ours all the time.

If you dare declare that you are free, free you are this moment. If you say you are bound, bound you will remain. This is what Advaita boldly declares. I have told you the ideas of the Dualists. You can take whichever you like.

The highest ideal of the Vedanta is very difficult to understand, and people are always quarrelling about it, and the greatest difficulty is, that when they get hold of certain ideas they deny and fight other ideas. Take up what suits you, and let others take up what they need. If you are desirous of clinging to this little individuality, to this limited manhood, remain in it, have all these desires, and be content and pleased with them. If your experience of manhood has been very good and nice, retain it as long as you like; and you can do so, for you are the makers of your own fortunes; none can compel you to give up your manhood. You will be men as long as you like; none can prevent you. If you want to be angels, you will be angels, this is the law. But there may be others who do not want to be angels even. What right have you to think that theirs is a horrible notion ? You may be frightened to lose a hundred pounds; but there may be others who would not wink if they lost all the money they had in the world. There have been such men and still there are. Why do you dare to judge them according to your standard ? You cling on to your limitations and these little worldly ideas may be your highest ideal. You are welcome to them. It will be to you wish. But there are others who have seen the truth, and cannot rest in these limitations, who have done with these things and want to get beyond. The world with all its enjoyments is a mere mud-puddle for them. Why do you want to bind them down to your ideas ? You must get rid of this tendency once for all. Accord a place to everyone.

I once read a story about some ships that were caught in a cyclone in the South Sea Islands, and there was a picture of it in

the *Illustarted London News*. All of them were wrecked except one English vessel, which weathered the storm. The picture showed the men who were going to be drowned, standing on the decks and cheering the people who were sailing through the storm.* Be brave and generous like that. Do not drag others down to where you are. Another foolish notion is that if we lose our little individuality, there will be no morality, no hope for humanity. As if everybody had been dying for humanity all the time! God bless you! If in every country there were two hundred men and women really wanting to do good to humanity, the millennium would come in five days. We know how we are dying for humanity! These are all tall talks, and nothing else. The history of the world shows that those who never thought of their little individuality were the greatest benefactors of the human race, and that the more men and women think of themselves, the less are they able to do for others. One is unselfishness, and the other selfishness. Clinging on to little enjoyments, and to desire the continuation and repetition of this state of things is utter selfishness. It arises not from any desire for truth, its genesis is not in kindness for other beings, but in the utter selfishness of the human heart, in the idea, "I will have everything, and do not care for anyone else." This is as it appears to me. I would like to see more moral men in the world like some of those grand old prophets and sages of ancient times who would have given up a hundred lives if they could by so doing benefit one little animal! Talk of morality and doing good to others! Silly talk of the present time!

I would like to see moral man like Gautama Buddha, who did not believe in a personal God or a personal soul, never asked about them, but was a perfect agnostic, and yet, a man who was ready to lay down his life for anyone, and worked all his life for the good of all, and thought only of the good of all. Well has it been said by his biographer, in describing his birth, that he was born for the good of the many, as a blessing to the many. He did not go to the forest to meditate for his own salvation; he felt that the world was burning, and that he must find a way out. 'Why is there so much misery in the world?'—was the one question that dominated his whole life. Do you think we are so moral as the

*H.M.S. Calliope and the American men-of-war at Samoa.—Ed.

Buddha ?

The more selfish a man, the more immoral he is. And so also with the race. That race which is bound down to itself, has been the most cruel and the most wicked in the whole world. These has not been a religion that has clung to this dualism more than that founded by the Prophet of Arabia, and there has not been a religion which has shed so much blood and been so cruel to other men. In the Koran there is the doctrine that a man who does not believe these teachings should be killed, it is a mercy to kill him ! And the surest way to get to heaven, where there are beautiful houris, and all sorts of sense enjoyments, is by killing these unbelievers. Think of how much bloodshed there has been in consequence of such beliefs !

In the religion of Christ there was little of crudeness; there is very little difference between the pure religion of Christ and that of the Vedanta. You find there the idea of oneness. but Christ also preached dualistic ideas to the people, in order to give them something tangible to take hold of, to lead them up to the highest ideal. The same prophet who preached, "Our Father which art in heaven," also preached. "I and my Father are one" and the same prophet knew that through the "Father in heaven" lies the way to the "I and my Father are one." There was only blessing and love in the religion of Christ, but as soon as crudeness crept in, it was degraded into something not much better than the religion of the Prophet of Arabia. It was crudeness indeed,—this fight for the little self, this clinging on to the "I," not only in this life, but also in the desire for its continuance even after death. This they declare to be unselfishness; this the foundation of morality ! Lord help us, if this be the foundation of morality ! And strangely enough, men and women who ought to know better, think all morality will be destroyed, if these little selves go, and stand aghast at the idea that morality can only stand upon their destruction. The watchword of all well-being, of all moral good, is not I but thou. Who cares whether there is a heaven or a hell, who cares, if there is a soul or not, who cares if there is an unchangeable or not ? Here is the world, and it is full of misery. Go out into it as Buddha did, and struggle to lessen it or die in the attempt. Forget yourselves; this is the first lesson to be learnt, whether you are a theist or an atheist, whether you are an agnostic or a Vedantist, a Christian or a Mohammedan. The one

lesson obvious to all is the destruction of the little self and the building up of the Real Self.

Two forces have been working side by side in parallel lines. The one says "I," the other says "not I." Their manifestation is not only in man but in animals, not only in animals but in the smallest worms That tigress that plunges her fangs into the warm blood of a human being, would give up her own life to protect her young. The most depraved man, who thinks nothing of taking the lives of his brother men, will perhaps sacrifice himself without any hesitation, to save his starving wife and children. Thus throughout creation these two forces are working side by side, where you find the one, you find the other too. The one is selfishness, the other is unselfishness. The one is acquisition, the other is renunciation. The one takes, the other gives. From the lowest to the highest, the whole universe is the playground of these two forces It does not require any demonstration; it is obvious to all.

What right has any section of the community to base the whole work and evolution of the universe upon one of these two factors alone, upon competition and struggle? What right has it to base the whole working of the universe upon passion, and fight, upon competition, and struggle? That these exist we do not deny; but what right has anyone to deny the working of the other force? Can any man deny that love, this "not I," this renunciation, is the only positive power in the universe? The other is only the misguided employment of the power of love; the power of love brings competition, the real genesis of competition is in love. The real genesis of evil is in unselfishess. The creator of evil is good, and the end is also good It is only misdirection of the power of good. A man who murders another is perhaps moved to do so by the love of his own child. His love has become limited to that one little baby, to the exclusion of the millions of other human beings in the universe. Yet, limited or unlimited, it is the same love.

Thus the motive power of the whole universe, in whatever way it manifests, is that one wonderful thing, unselfishness, renunciation, love, the real, the only living force in existence. Therefore, the Vedantist insists upon that oneness. We insist upon this explanation because we cannot admit to causes of the universe. If we simply hold that by limitation the same beautiful

wonderful love appears to be evil or vile, we find the whole universe explained by the one force of love. If not, two causes of the universe have to be taken for granted, one good and the other evil, one love and the other hatred. Which is more logical? Certainly the one-force theory.

Let us now pass on to things which do not possibly belong to dualism. I cannot stay longer with the dualists, I am afraid. My idea is to show that the highest ideal of morality and unselfishness goes hand in hand with the highest metaphysical conception, and that you need not lower your conception to get ethics and morality, but on the other hand, to reach a real basis of morality and ethics you must have the highest philosophical and scientific conceptions. Human knowledge is not antagonistic to human well-being. On the contrary, it is knowledge alone that will save us in every department of life,—in knowledge is worship. The more we know the better for us. The Vedantist says, the cause of all that is apparently evil is the limitation of the unlimited. The love which gets limited into little channels and seems to be evil, eventually comes out at the other end and manifests itself as God. The Vedanta also says that the cause of all this apparent evil is in ourselves; do not blame any supernatural being, neither be hopeless and despondent, nor think we are in a place from which we can never escape unless someone comes and lends us a helping hand. That cannot be, says the Vedanta; we are like silk worms. We make the thread out of our own substance, and spin the cocoon, and in course of time, are imprisoned inside. But this is not for ever. In that cocoon we shall develop spiritual realisation, and like the butterfly, come out free. This network of *Karma*, we have woven around ourselves; and in our ignorance we feel as if we are bound, and weep and wail for help. But help does not come from without; it comes from within ourselves. Cry to all the gods in the universe. I cried for years, and in the end I found that I was helped. But help came from within. And I had to undo what I had done by mistake. That is the only way. I had to cut the net which I had thrown round myself, and the power to do this is within. Of this I am certain, that not one aspiration, well-guided or ill-guided, in my life, has been in vain, but that I am the resultant of all my past, both good and evil. I have committed many mistakes in my life, but mark you, I am sure of this, that without every one of those mistakes I should

not be what I am today, and so am quite satisfied to have made them. I do not mean that you are to go home and wilfully commit mistakes; do not misunderstand me in that way. But do not mope because of the mistakes you have committed, but know that in the end all will come out straight. It cannot be otherwise, because goodness is our nature, purity is our nature, and that nature can never be destroyed. Our essential nature always remains the same.

What we are to understand is this, that what we call mistakes, or evil, we commit because we are weak, and we are weak because we are ignorant. I prefer to call them mistakes. The word sin, although originally a very good word, has got a certain flavour to it that frightens me. Who makes us ignorant? We ourselves. We put our hands over our eyes and weep that it is dark. Take the hands away and there is light; the light exists always for us, the self-effulgent nature of the human soul. Do you not hear what your modern scientific men say? What is the cause of evolution? Desire. The animal wants to do something, but does not find the environment favours able, and therefore develops a new body. Who develops it? The animal itself, its will. You have developed from the lowest amoeba. Continue to exercise your will and it will take you higher still. The will is almighty. If it is almight, you may say, why cannot I do everything? But you are thinking only of your little self. Look back on yourselves from the state of the amoeba to the human being; who made all that? Your own will. Can you deny then that it is almighty? That which has made you come up so high can make you go higher still. What you want is character, strengthening of the will.

If I teach you, therefore, that your nature is evil, that you should go home and sit in sackcloth and ashes and weep your lives out, because you took certain false steps, it will not help you but will weaken you all the more, and I shall be showing you the road to more evil than good. If this room is full of darkness for thousands of years and you come in and begin to weep and wail, "Oh, the darkness," will the darkness vanish? Strike a march and light comes in a moment. What good will it do you to think your lives, "Oh, I have done evil, I have made many mistakes." It requires no ghost to tell us that. Bring in the light and the evil goes in a moment. Build up your character, and manifest

your Real Nature, the Effulgent, the Resplendent, the Ever-Pure, and call It up in everyone that you see I wish that everyone of us had come to such a state that even in the vilest of human beings we could see the Real Self within, and instead of condemning them, say, "Rise, thou effulgent one, rise thou who art always pure, rise thou birthless and deathless, rise almighty, and manifest thy true nature These little manifestations do not befit thee" This is the highest prayer that the Advaita teaches This is the one prayer, to remember our true nature, the God who is always within us, thinking of it always as infinite, almighty, ever-good, ever-beneficent, selfless, bereft of all limitations And because that nature is selfless it is strong and fearless, for only to selfishness comes fear He who has nothing to desire for himself, whom does he fear, and what can frighten him ? What fear has death for him ? What fear has evil for him ? So if we are Advaitists, we must think from this moment that our old self is dead and gone The old Mr , Mrs , and Miss So-and-So are gone, they were mere superstitions, and what remains is the ever-pure, the ever-strong, the almighty, the all-knowing,—that alone remains for us, and then all fear vanishes from us Who can injure us, the omnipresent ? All weakness has vanished from us, and our only work is to arouse this knowledge in our fellow beings We see that they too are the same pure self, only they do not know it, we must teach them, we must help them to rouse up their infinite nature This is what I feel to be absolutely necessary all over the world. These doctrines are old, older than many mountains possibly All truth is eternal. Truth is nobody's property, no race, no individual can lay any exclusive claim to it. Truth is the nature of all souls Who can lay any special claim to it ? But it has to be made practical, to be made simple, (for the highest truth are always simple), so that it may penetrate every pore of human society, and become the property of the highest intellects and the commonest minds, of the man, woman and the child at the same time. All these ratiocinations of logic, all these bundles of metaphysics, all these theologies and ceremonies, may have been good in their own time. but let us try to make things simpler and bring about the golden days when every man will be a worshipper, and the Reality in every man will be the object of worship.

PART II

21

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

SWAMI VISWASHRAYANANDA

Narendranath Dutta (Swami Vivekananda) was born in an upper middle-class Kayastha (high caste Hindu) family on 12 January 1863, in his paternal home at 3, Gour Mohan Mukherjee Lane, Calcutta Narendranath was the sixth child and the second and eldest living son of his parents, Vishwanath Dutta and Bhuvaneswari Devi. Afterwards Narendranath had two more sisters and two brothers—Mahendranath and Bhupendranath All the three brothers remained unmarried

Narendranath's father was an Attorney at the Calcutta High Court, earning nearly a thousand rupees per month The family atmosphere was a blend of modernism and orthodoxy, represented respectively by his father and mother Vishwanath had a liberal outlook but perhaps no deep faith in any religion Bhuvaneswari had devout deep faith in traditional Hinduism She was well versed in Bengali and knew some English She believed that she got Narendranath through the grace of Vireshwara Shiva of Varanasi. Narendranath in later life openly admitted her influence in the development of his character

Narendranath did not have any traditional Indian education in a *Pathshala* or *Tol* Passing the Entrance examination from the Metropolitan Institution in 1879, Narendranath was admitted into the Presidency College and after one year into the General Assemblies Institution (now Scottish Church College), from where he passed the F.A. and B.A. examinations in 1881 and 1884

respectively. After graduation he started studying Law in the Metropolitan Institution (now Vidyasagar College), completed the course in 1886, but did not appear in the final examination.

In student-life the mainstream of Narendranath's energy was diverted through the channel of searching for God, the Absolute Truth. He used to practise continence and concentration of mind as prescribed by Indian Seers, and also studied voraciously for an intellectual grasp of the problem like the Western philosophers. This quest of Truth brought him in contact with Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen, Shivnath Shastri and others of the Brahmo Samaj, of which Narendranath was a member for a period, and with Brajendranath Seal. He also corresponded with Herbert Spencer. But nothing and none could satisfy him and he eagerly searched for a man who had 'seen' God and could guide him to do so. After a period of fruitless search at last in 1882, he found Sri Ramakrishna to be the man. He began to visit Ramakrisna at Dakshineswar but was cautious enough not to accept the validity of his statements without sifting them thoroughly through the sieve of his rational mind beset with all modern doubts of the age. And finally being satisfied he surrendered to him and realised under his guidance the Absolute Truth in 1886.

Narendranath had to pass through the stormiest days of his life, both internal and external, caused by the sudden death of his father in 1884, reducing the family overnight from the luxury to penury.

Before passing away on 16 August 1886, Sri Ramakrishna entrusted the responsibility of carrying out his work to Narendranath, saying, "You will do great things in this world; you will bring spiritual consciousness to men and assuage the misery of the humble and the poor." At the time the world was being assailed by the atheistic ideas getting fresh impetus from scientific discoveries and the rational outlook of the intellectuals. Narendranath started his work by assembling his brother-disciples, a band of young men, in a rented house, later on known as Baranagore Math, where they look formal *Sannyasa* and new names. Narendranath assumed the name Vivekananda : "I assumed" he said, "as it is customary with all Sannyasins—on my renunciation of the world; it signifies literally the bliss of discrimination."

Narendranath toured Northern India up to Hardwar thrice in 1888, 1889 and 1890 from Baranagore Math, meeting Pawhari Baba during the second tour. On his third tour he did not come back to Baranagore and travelled alone through Central and Southern India and reached the Temple of Kanyakumari in the last week of December 1892. During the period he met Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the Maharaja of Alwar, Khetri, Mysore and Ramnad, came in close contact with the masses of India and thus acquired intimate experience of the degraded social, economic and spiritual condition of the nation; all the while he tried in vain to find out a way to uplift the nation. At last "sitting on the last rock of India" (now known as Vivekananda-Shila), he "hit upon a plan"—he visualised that religion is the blood of the nation's body, the impurities of this blood are responsible for all our present maladies; the nation can rise again if this blood is purified, and the first step in this direction is to make it conscious of the greatness of its age old religion and civilisation. This idea inspired him to join the Parliament of Religions to be held in Chicago the following September and to preach there the universal ideas of Vedanta. His disciples, Alasinga Perumal and others of Madras and Raja of Khetri, collected the money necessary for the voyage, and on 31 May 1893 Vivekananda sailed for America from Bombay, reached Vancouver in July via Singapore, Hongkong and Tokyo. Arriving at Chicago he came to know that he would not be allowed to speak in the Parliament of Religions because he carried no credentials with him. This was a hard blow not only mental but physical also, because Vivekananda now left with little money faced the danger of death due to cold and starvation. A man of destiny, he overcame all obstacles and at last was accepted as a delegate to the Parliament on the recommendation of Professor J.H. Wright of Harvard University and the motherly help of Mrs. G.W. Hale of Chicago.

On 11 September 1893, the opening day of the Parliament of Religions, a short speech beginning with 'Sisters and brothers of America' made Vivekananda the most popular speaker there and a world-figure. He spoke at least 11 times on different occasions in the Parliament. These speeches impressed deeply the modern Western mind as to what true religion is, and along with it the greatness of Hindu civilisation and Hindu religion. This appreciation of the West aroused the Indian nation, as expected by

Vivekananda, and made it conscious of its own greatness, removing completely the inferiority complex with the pioneering movements of the century initiated by Raja Rammohan Ray, Dayananda Saraswati, Annie Besant and others could not do.

After the Parliament of Religions was over on 27 September, Vivekananda in a hurricane tour lectured in different cities of the United States, fearlessly preaching his ideas and ignoring false propagandas directed against him. Then in February 1895, he settled in New York, opened a centre there for regular classes and also paid attention to the building of spiritual lives of his Western disciples, initiating some of them in *Brahmacharya* and *Sanyasa* also.

From America Vivekananda went to England via Paris in 1895 and came back towards the end of the year. From this time his lectures were taken down by his disciple and stenographer Mr. J.J. Goodwin. Vivekananda went to London again in 1896. This time he toured the Continent. During these two visits to Europe Vivekananda became acquainted with Professor Max Muller, Paul Deussen, A. Sturdy, Miss Margaret Noble and Mr and Mrs. Sevier. The last three became his disciples and sacrificed their lives for serving him through serving India. In December 1896 Vivekananda left London with Mr. Goodwin and the Seviers and reached Colombo on 15 January 1897, touched India at Pumban on 26 January 1897, and from there proceeding through Rameswar, Ramnad and Madras, reached Calcutta on 20 February 1897. He was overwhelmed with ovations befitting a national hero everywhere he went. From May till the end of the year 1897 Vivekananda toured Almora, Punjab, Kashmir and Rajputana, everywhere inspiring the nation to "Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached." He established the Ramakrishna Mission on 1 May 1897, and the Belur Math on 9 December 1898.

Vivekananda left India for the second time on 20 June 1899, and reached New York via London. Establishing a few centres on the Pacific Coast he sailed from New York on 26 July 1900 for Paris where he was invited to attend the Congress of the History of Religions. There he met Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose. From there he came back via Cairo to Belur Math on 9 December 1900. Towards the end of 1901, he met the Reverend Oda and Okakura who came to Belur Math to invite him to Japan.

Vivekananda left his moral body on 4 July 1902, at Belur

said, "the modern system (based on heredity) is a barrier to Indian progress" He never supported the custom of untouchability

He felt the need of a school of Indian historians "to strike out an independent path of historical research for ourselves" with scientific accuracy, and also of the revival of Indian art

Swami Vivekananda based all his ideas on universality and taught us to do so ' Every idea has to become broad till it covers the whole world" He said more than once that he was not for India alone, but for the whole world He loved India so much because India alone has the potentiality to bring about a synthesis of the East and the West—spirituality and material progress—and inspire other nation to do so. If India fails to do this, he said, then in the whole world "will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force, and competition its ceremonies, and the human soul its sacrifice"

His idea of religion also was universal. "Each man is potentially divine The goal is to manifest this divinity by controlling nature, external and internal That is the whole of religion." He said, every one can and should manifest this divinity already in him by doing 'work as worship' and 'serving man as God' in every field of his life The manifestation of this divinity should be the purpose of our education and society To realise this truth is essential also for feeling us one with others and for growing universal love in our mind Comparing the Truth of Oneness realised by Seers with modern scientific truths, and showing it not to be contrary to them (particularly in his works 'Raja-Yoga' and 'Jnana-Yoga'), he also satisfied the modern intelligentsia Regarding the theory of Revolution, he said that the theory of Involution also should be accepted.

In a world it may be said that his life beacons the upward path of human civilisation.

22

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : A STUDY

MANMOHAN GANGULY

INTRODUCTION

We need not begin with an apology, the usual preface to an article, although we hold with Sister Nivedita that 'the moment has not come for gauging the religious significance of Vivekananda. Religion is a living seed His sowing is but over, the time of harvest is not come yet'

We pay our heart's allegiance to the Swami Vivekananda, not because he was a profound scholar, or a thinker, or an exponent of the Vedanta, or a great religious teacher, if we are permitted to use the expression, or an apostle of truth and harmony, but because he had a fascinating personality which spread a graceful halo around it, and which has left a permanent impression on our minds, never to be obliterated in the ceaseless flow of time

If we are asked, why we have chosen the life of Vivekananda as a fit object of study, in preference to others, the only reply that we should give is that he dedicated his life, like Samson, to our regeneration We do not set him up before our readers as an ideal famous for his flight in the unknown realm of original thought, and for revelation therefrom of some original truths to mankind We do not admire our hero, as one who has put a rationalistic construction upon several of the most difficult texts of the *Vedas*, but be take him in a different light His mode of thinking rather

than his thought, his method of explaining rather than his method of explaining rather than his explanation are what we admire We know full well that no part of his religious system is a spiritual innovation or a revelation, here, in India, the Mother of religions. He himself has disowned any claim to original thought; but his method of tackling spiritual or secular problems is wonderful. He was marked by a union of conservatism and progress—marching forward not forgetting the past. Although we do not accord an implicit obedience to many of his ideas yet they are singularly original; one thing which we note with wonder is his capacity of grasping the most knotty points of almost every branch of thought. There are many whose depth of knowledge in any particular sphere of thought is far more profound than that of the Swamiji, but the peculiarity with him was that his mind had depth as well as extent.

The different branches of thought are so correlated to each other and hence have such a direct or indirect bearing on each other that, extent of knowledge should not be overlooked. It was this extent of thought that made him discuss the social, political, or spiritual problems from a scientific point of view.

The life of Vivekananda is of varied interest; it presents such different aspects that we seem to lose our breath when we consider them. He towers above all in solitary grandeur, but this grandeur, instead of dazzling us blind, delights our eyes with a soft mellowed light Vivekananda's life may seem an apparent paradox, to an ordinary people; but this paradox, if carefully analysed, would be proved as perfectly homogeneous, and consistent as possible. Vivekananda's was an organic mind.

It is natural that Vivekananda's life has not as yet taken a firm hold on the public mind; but it is destined to do so, at no distant future; for we see the spirit of Vivekananda, here and there, in Swadeshi cult, and literature, however misconstrued that spirit may be. It is not too much to expect his spirit manifesting itself in its full form when the nation is not yet educated to catch it ? The ideas which Raja Ram Mohan Ray propagated about a century ago have not as yet asserted themselves fully. This is a law of nature. Who can override this ?

THE BACKGROUND

The last century had a grand entrance, and an equally grand

exit; its existence was ushered in by Raja Ram Mohan Ray, a true prince, according to Prof. Max Muller, and its passing away was heralded forth by Keshub, Dayananda, Paramhansa and Pundit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, and it was reserved for Justice Ranade and Swami Vivekananda to toll its death-knell, themselves following it in quick succession.

More than a quarter of a century ago the country was in a ferment, and the pulse of the nation had begun to beat quickly in unison with the new ideas and thoughts that indicated the advent of a new era; it was a new era indeed, alike in the domain of spirituality, politics and literature.

Keshub Chunder Sen's influence was then in full vigour. Ramakrishna Paramhansa's influence had just then begun to be felt; it was Keshub and his followers, to my mind, who brought Paramhansa to the gaze of the public; Ramakrishna had already begun to exercise his influence upon Keshub, for we see the latter day utterances of Keshub to be tinged with the ideas of Paramhansa; so we infer that Ramakrishna Paramhansa's influence was not insignificant in the religious movement that was then going on. Through the agency of Paramhansa, we believe, that the Motherhood of God was introduced in the New Dispensation.

It has been remarked that in the religious world there was much ferment; in the N.W.P. and the Punjab, Swami Dayananda Saraswati was preaching his new doctrines In Bengal, Maharshi Debendra Nath and Keshub Chunder Sen were working enthusiastically; many religious societies on Hinduism were organised and pulpit lectures introduced. The editor of the Nabya Bharat remarked in his journal in 1893, if we remember aright, that reilgion was the all-absorbing theme of that period; religious books were published by cartloads, and religious dramas were being enacted on the boards of theatres. This will be more manifest to the readers if they would refer to the article *Hindu Dharmer Andolon O' Sanskar* (Movement and reform of Hinduism) contributed to the Nabya Bharat some twenty-one years ago.

In the literary and political world there was a revival; it is needless to point out that the revival, we are speaking of, was not a spasmodic one, but an evolution of the scheme of reform inaugurated by Raja Ram Mohan Ray Michael had just then closed his earthly career but the echoes of his soul-animating strains were still resounding. Dinabandhu was no more; Aukhoy

Kumar Dutt had already fallen a victim to the fell disease to which he afterwards succumbed, and had ceased to Indianise western science; the first part of his *Upasak Sampradaya* (Religious Sects of India) had been published. Bankim Chandra was then ruling and every literary man was paying homage to him, there were lesser lights that were shining in their full effulgence, and among them were Hem Chandra, Nabin Chandra, Kali Prasanna, Chandra Nath, and a host of others.

In the art of journalism Dr. Sambhu Chander, and Kristo Das were exercising full sway; in the domain of research Drs Rajendra Lall, Bhandarkar. Ram Das Sen, and the Hon'ble Telang were most well-known, and in the domain of politics Naoroji, Ranade, and Kristo Das were foremost, and last of all, though not the least, Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar was ransacking the treasures of western science, and 'flinging his soul into it with an enthusiasm that threatened to devour him'. The Science Association had just then been organised; this Science Association will mark a new epoch in the history of India.

Thus we see that the period we are speaking of was literally to India, the period of Renaissance. Then our hero was only a lad in his early teens.

Although the late Swamiji was a true genius, yet his mind was being shaped to a great extent by the inspiration which he was drawing unconsciously from this Renaissance.

EARLY LIFE

Durga Charan Dutt, a man of money and landed property was the grandfather of Swamiji, he was well versed in the Persian and Sanskrit lore, and had a religious turn of mind as was manifest from his usual company with ascetics and *Sannyasins* in his garden, aloof from the tumult and bustle of society; his only son, Biswa Nath Dutt was born when Durga Charan was twenty-four years old. Ere this, he had been thinking of giving up the world, but could not carry out his desire into effect, for the consciousness of *Pitri rin* (debt owed to the forefathers, which is liquidated by the birth of a male issue) was always weighing upon his mind; this incident lightened his burden and he thought himself now emancipated from the trammels of *Pitri rin*, and renounced the world; no one could trace his whereabouts. According to the time-

honoured custom of the *Sannyasins*, he came to see his family and friends after 12 years of *Sannyas*. His relatives tried to keep him at home, but to no effect; they shut him in a room for three days, after which, finding the doors slightly ajar he effected his escape and never returned.

Swamiji's father, Biswa Nath Dutt, an attorney of the High Court was not noted for his piety or religious proclivities; but he was charitably disposed; so much so, that when he died, he left no inheritance to the family but chilling want and carking misery.

Biswa Nath Dutt, and his wife were sorry at heart for want of a male issue; they worshipped the idol *Bireswar Mahadeb* (Shiva—the Hindu God) to grant them a child. Afterwards, Swamiji was born in 1863; he was supposed to have been born by propitiating the deity Bireswar and hence was named Bireswar, which contracted into *Bire* and afterwards into *Beele*.

This child Bireswar was religious from his very infancy; many anecdotes are related expressing his religious nature even at an early age.

Bireswar's memory was extraordinarily retentive from his very infancy till his death; what he read once was well treasured up in his mind. It is said that, while very young, he detected and exposed the mistakes of a professional *Kirtanwala* (singer of religious songs) who was chanting pieces from the *Ramayan* (Indian Epic); he was so satisfied that he gave the boy a good treat of sweetmeats.

He was at first sent to a *Guru Mahasaya* or a pedagogue to acquire the first rudiments of the three 'R's; he was placed under a private tutor at home for some time and then was admitted into the Metropolitan Institution. After some time he was transferred to the Shampukur Branch of the Metropolitan Institution, but he appeared from the Main (Metropolitan) at the Entrance Examination and passed in the first division; read for a year in the Presidency College and then got himself admitted into the General Assembly's Institution and appeared from that College both at the F.A. and B A. examinations. Narendra Nath (as Bireswar came to be known later) graduated in the year 1884.

Dr. Hastie was then the Principal of the College; he had a high opinion of Narendra Nath. In the G.A. Institution they had a debating club. On one occasion, Dr. Hastie was requested to be their president; but owing to previous engagements he could not

comply with their request but recommended Narendra Nath to preside over their club for that sitting; the boys were astonished to hear his name recommended for he did not seem a bright luminary in the class; but to their utter astonishment, Narendra Nath discharged the function of the president very satisfactorily.

Narendra Nath was a voracious reader. He was very fond of literature, and philosophy and not given to light reading He read so many books by this time that his remarks were often accompanied by quotations from them, and at the same time were very original, his own. Let us cite one of his remarks which led a friend of his to be attracted to him. Narendra Nath was discussing with a friend of his, the difference between an ordinary, and an extraordinary man. He said in the course of his conversation, 'Do you know the difference between an ordinary and an extraordinary man ? It is this. An ordinary man tends to idealise the real things, whereas an extraordinary man tends to realise the ideal things. Hence I admire Paramhansa.

Narendra Nath, like his father, had a sweet voice; he cultivated the science of music from the Entrance class His father placed him under the tuition of Beni Ostad, a pupil of Ahmed Khan; he continued to learn music for 4 or 5 years and afterwards contributed songs and wrote a learned preface to a book of music published conjointly by Baishnab Charan Basak and Upendra Chandra Mukherjee of the Basumati. Narendra Nath could sing very well and used to sing at the Brahmo Samaj. We had the good fortune to hear him sing to the accompaniment of *Pakhoaj* (musical instrument), himself playing on it.

This gift of his went a great way to court the favour of his Master, Paramhansa. How many times did his songs bring Paramhansa to God-consciousness of *Samadhi* ! At first he was not familiar with Bengali songs; for Paramhansa he began to learn Bengali songs The first Bengali song that he sang before his master was the oft-quoted one beginning with *Mon Chalo Niji Niketane* (Oh my soul ! enter thy own abode !)

CONTACT WITH HIS MASTER

Let us return from the mundane to the spiritual world. Swamiji's first interview with Paramhansa was at Suresh Mitra's house at Simla (a locality in Calcutta) where Ram Chandra Dutta

brought him to entertain Paramhansa by his songs. The second interview with Paramhansa was at Dakshineswar (a place near Calcutta) where Swamiji went on a pleasure trip, in the company of his friends. Paramhansa told him to come alone. He went a third time to see him alone and had a long talk with him on many topics. Paramhansa placed his feet on Swamiji's body; upon this, the world seemed to him to be receding; he thought he was about to be hypnotised, and cried out 'Sir, what are you practising on me ? My parents are still living.' Paramhansa then brought him to his sense and began to console him.

On the first interview Swamiji took Paramhansa for a mad man, but characterised by sincerity and renunciation He thought that incessant thinking had brought about derangement of the brain; gradually he became attracted by him and began to cling to him with tenacity. Let us trace the secret of it.

From his very early life Swamiji tried to catch the First Principle in the vast mechanism of the Universe; his soul began to cry like Goethe's Faust, 'Where shall I grasp thee, Infinite Nature, ah where !' He had been yearning to learn 'the open-sesame' of the infinite treasure cave of spirituality and in the language of Schiller, the Great German poet,

'——to seek in the marvel of chance the
Law which pervades, and controls it and to seek the
Reposing pole fixed in the whirl of events.'

and in his own language 'to solve the problems and enigmas that have been perplexing the human intellect from time immemorial.'

This is well illustrated by his quaint question to his Master, 'Have you seen and realised God ?' The saint replied, 'Verily my child, I have seen myself and shall show unto thee.' This moment is an important factor in the development of Swamiji's life; for till then he had been getting answers to the contrary.

Now he was awed and dazzled into admiration. Henceforth a true communion of soul began to take place between them. Paramhansa initiated him into the mysteries of being. This idea of realisation became in his afterlife, the chief tenet in his articles of belief. We first this idea repeated in many of his speeches and conversations; this idea is repeated in his first lecture at the Parliament of Religions. In the course of his lecture he said, "The

best proof a Hindu sage gives about the soul, about God is, *I have seen the soul, I have seen God !*'

His life was now being turned to the harmony which became his motto afterwards. His mind began to drink deep but quiet draughts of inspiration in his company, which was kindled into reverie and ecstasy, for he began to pray to the Divine Mother, 'No more of knowledge and analysis, O, Mother, make me mad after Thee.' The Mother responded to the call of her guileless child.

By the contact of Paramhansa, all that was dross in the life of Swamiji was converted into gold; in fact, the saint revolutionised the mind of the spiritual aspirant, overthrew the fabric which the Swami built, and built a new one in its place. Verily, this was his *Puneryanma* (rebirth). Although he had the dim smouldering fire of spirituality in him, it was set ablaze by a few puffs from the saint. The thread of his secular life snapped. The spiritual fire that was burning in him seemed to consume all the limitations and differentiations in his mind, and like heat tended to expand his soul infinitely, for the energy of this fire was infinite. In this period he amassed a store of potential energy to be used up and converted into kinetic energy later on; dynamically speaking, the work by which the potential energy was gained was perfect control of the senses, or *Jitendriyatta*, as we call it. His soul now could find no pleasure in limitations; it flapped its wings, as it were, to go beyond limitations and relativity, and to fly in the absolute; he began to say with neversatiated craving, 'Light, more light.'

Before this he was articled to Babu Nimai Charan Bose, the well-known attorney of the High Court and was also preparing for the B. L. Examination. In the meantime, Bisu Dutta, his father died leaving them in poverty. Narendra now found himself in a sea of misery and became a teacher of the Metropolitan Institution. I have heard from a friend of mine who was his pupil that the Swamiji used to insist on moral and religious teachings. Narendra now lost the equilibrium of his mind and intimated to Paramhansa—for he was his guide, monitor, and guardian angel, so to speak—to give him his best advice; forthwith the saint replied, 'Apply to My Mother;' Narendra was now put to a crucial test; he went to the temple of *Kali* (Goddess) at Dakshineswar to pray for money; but lo, he had forgotten everything in the temple; money become mere lumber to him, and prayed instead,

'Mother, give me *Bibek* (conscience) and *Bairagya* (renunciation),' Narendra now began to call on his Master frequently; once in a garden at Cossipore (a locality in calcutta) he told him 'Sir, what are you doing for me ?' The saint asked, 'What do you want, my child ?' Narendra Nath replied, 'I want to be buried in *Samadhi* (complete union of one's soul with the God) continually for five or six days.' Forthwith the saint replied, 'You are a fool to ask such a boon; why, don't you like to realise and see God in ordinary life without having recourse to *Samadhi* ?' Narendra said, 'Do what you think proper; but do something for me after all.' It is probable that Swamiji was first initiated by his Master into *Ram Mantra* (to concentrate on Ram's name). The period was his period of *Sadhan* (meditation) according to the instructions from his Master.

The saint now closed his earthly life in *Maha Samadhi* (demise) in 1886. From 1881 to 1886 Narendra became the right hand of his Master, as the saint used to say A few self-sacrificing youngmen nursed the saint during his illness. Now these young men determined to work out the ideas propagated by paramhansa and they assembled at Barnagore (a suburb of Calcutta) with Narendra Nath as their heard. A *Math* (temple-*cum*-dormitory) was established at the expense of Suresh Mitra. There they continued to read and mediate. One of the characteristic features of this *math* was *Sankirtan* (devotional songs). Once a whole day *Kirtan* (hymn) was organised; they used to chant the name of the Lord the whole day and night, taking rest for four hours only. This continued for seven days in succession. This scheme was abandoned, for it told severely on their health.

Now he formally renounced the world; practised severe penances in many parts of India. How many sleepless nights did he pass in meditation ! Then he went out on a tour throughout the whole of India from the snow-clad Himalayas to Kanya Kumarika (Cape Comorin). During this period of travel he became acquainted with many men of note and territorial consequence, among whom are many Rajas and Chiefts (Princes and Chieftains). We have tried our best to gather information of this period; but this period is very obscure, inasmuch as he travelled on many occasions singly, without any of his *Guru Bhais* (Brother Disciples) as his companion,

During this period of travel he visited almost all the important places of pilgrimage from Karna Prayag, Pravas, Dwarka, to Kanya Kumari. He was always accompanied by one or two of his *Guru Bhais*. He began to think now that though he had given up the worldly ties, still he had attachment for his *Guru Bhais* and thought that this *Maya* (attachment) might be detrimental to spirituality; so he determined to travel alone, but the *Guru Bhais*, would not leave him. He stealthily went away from Delhi, but they too followed him; he devised many means to baffle their pursuits and to put them off the scent. What by entreaty, and what by threat, he had to elude their grasp, when they succeeded in ferretting him out of his place of seclusion and retreat ! They travelled several hundred miles to accompany him; but he was firm and would not allow him to be entangled in the meshes of *Maya* again. From Delhi he travelled alone in many parts of Rajputana, e.g., Ajmere, Jaipur, Alwar, Mt. Abu, etc., and formed the acquaintance of the Raja of Khetri. From Rajputana he travelled alone to Pravas, Porbunder, Dwarka, Mandabi, and Narayan Sarobar. At Mandabi he met with one of his associates, but by threat sent him away. During this period he travelled in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies and formed acquaintance with many men of note. He became acquainted with Bal Gangadhar Tilak and also became known to Raja Sankar Pandurang, the great Sanskrit scholar, and helped him in the translation of the *Vedas*; here he got ample opportunities to study the *Vedas* thoroughly and also formed the acquaintance of Hari Dass Behari Dass, Dewan to the Nawab of Junagadh. This gentle man, Hari Dass Behari Dass introduced Swamiji to many Rajas and Chiefs among whom the Thakor of Limdi and the Raja of Kutch are important and hence was indirectly instrumental in the success which the Swamiji achieved in his mission.

LOOKS TO THE WEST

Vivekananda had a firm belief for a long time before his starting for America, that he had a mission to perform, that he had a task imposed upon him by his Master. He thought that unless an energy comes from across the seas, it will not be possible to shake off the lethargy of the nation of Lotus-eaters, to rouse their dormant spirit, and that the medium of the Occident is

necessary to infuse life and vigor into our fossilised constitution.

That he had the consciousness of a mission, a vocation like Milton, is evident from the following cuttings from his private letters. He wrote in a letter to a friend of his at Madras from America, 'Hundred times I had a mind to go out of the country and go back; but then I think I am a determined devil, and I have a call from above, I see no ways but his eyes see and I must stick to my guns.'

'Look sharp, my boy, take courage, we are destined by the Lord to do great things in India. Have faith; we will do, we the poor and despised who really feel.' In another part he says, 'I am called by the Lord for this,' and again 'we are selected by the Lord to do great things '

This consciousness was not roused in him after the idea of the Parliament of Religions was announced in the newspapers; his mission to work in the West was independent of the Parliament of Religions; he must have gone to the West even if the idea of the Parliament were not conceived. The Parliament of Religions was simply a means to the end; it rather hastened the fulfilment of his mission. For, he says in a letter addressed to a friend before the Parliament sat, 'First, I will try in America; If I fail, try in England, if I fail, go back to India and wait for further command from High'.

He had been thinking during his travel how he would carry out his plan of campaign. He came to Madras where he formed the acquaintance of many self-sacrificing young graduates. He persuaded them into his mode of belief. Before this, the Raja of Khetri in Rajputana had become his disciple; now H H. the Maharaja of Mysore became his admirer. The Maharaja of Mysore rendered him pecuniary help to start for America; and also subscriptions were raised in Madras by Babu Manmatha Nath Bhattacharji to meet his expenses.

Let us mention an important incident which sustained this consciousness which dropped now and then, finding no means to fulfil his mission He had been dreaming daily, that his Master was rebuking him for being infirm of purpose, and for neglect of duty. He went to a person nearby who could read thoughts on seeing a man. Just on seeing Vivekananda, the man said, 'Why are you not following your Guru's orders ? Go, and discharge the task that he has imposed upon you.'

This incident braced up his drooping spirit, put him on his mettle and made him most firm in the conviction. This person is alluded to in his lecture on 'The Powers of the Mind' delivered in America.

Swamiji was not invited to represent Hinduism; at the request of his friends, he consented to go and to try if he could find an opportunity to represent Hinduism. He went by the Pacific; alighted on his way in China and Japan and landed in Vancouver. From Vancouver he went through Canada to Chicago. There his scanty funds were exhausted and he became penniless. He had not even the wherewithal to pay his bill of fare, no clothing to protect his mortal frame against elemental warfare; he looked for help to a friend, and a countryman of his who also went there to represent the religion he professed. He received the most galling and humiliating treatment at his hands, who did nothing for him but tried to thwart his progress out of jealousy by circulating false rumours. This, he has said in his Madras lecture. Starvation and cold had oftentimes made him think to give up the mission, but his inner nature sustained his failing spirit. The following cuttings will bear me out.

He wrote to a friend just on reaching America, 'It was very cold and I suffered much from want of warm clothing.... Starvation, cold, hooting in the streets for my quaint dress—these are what I have to flight through.' In another letter he writes, 'I do not know whether I shall go back to Chicago for want of money . . . . If I die of cold, or disease, or hunger you take the task.' Even he had not the money to come back to India. He says in another letter, 'If you fail in keeping me here, send some money to get me out of the country.'

On reaching America, he saw that the preparations for the Parliament were going on; meanwhile he began to address small social circles at Boston, and Salem, etc.; he thought that even if he had money how he could find an opportunity of being introduced to the organisers of the Parliament; there was the rub. Let us cite a passage from a letter of his written to his friend wherein it is stated how he overcame this difficulty. 'At a village near Boston I made the acquaintance of Dr. Wright, Professor of Greek, in the Harvard University. He sympathised much and urged upon me the necessity of going to the Parliament of Religions which he thought would give me an introduction to the nation.'

This Professor is said to have requested the prime movers of the Parliament to invite him; he wrote to the following effect, 'He is more learned than all of us together.' Thus he was introduced. His speech electrified the audience. By a single speech he became famous like the 'Single-speech Hamilton.' The result of this speech was that all his wants were supplied. He writes to a friend, 'For many of the handsomest houses in the city are open to me, and all the time I am living as guest with somebody or other.'

We hope we may be pardoned if we tire the patience of our readers by presenting to them a few passages and remarks culled from the most well-known American newspapers.

Dr. Barrows, the President of the Parliament said, 'India, the Mother of religions was represented by Swami Vivekananda, the Orange-monk who exercised the most wonderful influence over his auditors.'

The New York Harald remarked : 'Vivekananda was undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions; after hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation.'

The Press remarked : 'Vivekananda's culture, eloquence and his fascinating personality have given us a new idea of civilisation. His fine intelligent face and his deep musical voice prepossessing one at once in his favour, has preached in clubs and churches until this faith has become familiar to us. He speaks without notes presenting his facts and his conclusions with the greatest art, the most convincing sincerity and rising often to rich inspiring eloquence.'

Another paper remarked : 'One of the most interesting personages is Professor Swami Vivekananda, a Hindu theologian of great learning, who made an address which captured the Congress, so to speak. There were bishops, and ministers of every Christian Church present and they were all taken by storm. The eloquence of the man with intellect beaming from his yellow face, his splendid English in describing the beauties of his time-honoured faith, all conspired to make a deep impression on the audience. From the day the wonderful Professor delivered that speech which was followed by other addresses, he was followed by a crowd wherever he went.'

We cull the following from a letter of Swamiji's containing a

description of the Parliament :

'On the morning of the opening of the Parliament we all assembled in a building called the Art Palace where one huge and other smaller temporary halls were erected for the sittings of the Parliament. Men from all nations were there; there was a grand procession and we were all marshalled on the platform Imagine a hall below and huge gallery above packed with six or seven thousand men and women representing the best culture of the country, and on the platform learned men of all the nations of the earth, and I who never spoke in my life, to address this august assemblage ! It was opened in great form with music and caremony, and speeches; and then the delegates were introduced one by one, and they stepped up and spoke; of course my heart was fluttering and my tongue nearly dried up; I was so much nervous, and could not venture to speak in the morning, . . . made a nice speech, . . . nicer, and were much applauded; they were all prepared and came with ready-made speeches. I was a fool and had none but bowed down to Devi Saraswati and stepped up and Dr. Barrows introduced me. My yellow dress had some effect, and then I made a short speech of thanking them and other things. When I addressed the assembly as 'Sisters and Brothers of America,' a deafening applause of two minutes followed, and then I proceeded, and when it was finished I sat down almost exhausted with emotion. The next day all the papers announced that my speech was the hit of the day and I became known to whole America. Truly, it is said by the great commentator Sridhar, *Mukang karoti Bachalam, etc.* (Thou makest the dumb fluent speakers, etc). His name be praised ! From that, I have become the celebrity, and the day I read my paper on Hinduism the hall was packed as it has never been before.'

A striking contrast is presented here between his condition before the sitting of the Parliament and after it. People of high rank vied with one another to shake hands with the Swamiji. His name become a household word in America. This aroused the jealousy of the sinecure officers of the Church and the missionaries. They strove hard to injure his reputation in every way possible;

they tried to pry into his secrets with their *Argus* eyes; some represented that he was not a bachelor and that he had many wives at home, and so forth. Thus they tried to pour forth the vial of their wrath over his success. We have heard him say that even his life was endangered. He put up with all these calmly befitting him as the dictator to the human mind in the domain of spirituality.

After staying a few years in America he went to Europe in 1896. In England he did not get such a broad field for work as in America, but he used to say that his work in England was more suceessful than that in America. In England many members of the Royal family used to come quite incognito to hear his lectures.

Swami Vivekananda was acquainted with many learned and well-known men of Europe and America, such as Professor Max Muller, Tessla, Maxim, Paul Deusson and a host of others. He was invited by Professor Max Muller at Oxford, and the savant was so charmed that he drove with Swamiji to the station to see him off. He furnished materials to the Profession to publish the life of Paramhansa

After visiting many parts of Europe he returned to India in 1897, a monument has been erected by the Raja of Ramnad, in the southern part of India, on the spot where he landed. He now toured through the whole of Northern India; established the Belur and Madras *Maths* to realise the ideal that he had been preaching so long. He started the *Udbodhan*, a fortnightly journal, to which he contributed several articles. After staying a few years in India he again started for America in 1899 Now the centre of his work was California. In June 1900 he went to New York and thence he came over to Europe to attend the Paris Exhibition where he was invited to address the Conference of the History of Religions; his speech has been published in their proceedings. From France he travelled through the southern part of Europe and thence came to Turkey where he was received with ovation; he delivered there lectures at Constantinople, thence he went to see the Pyramids in Egypt and thence returned to India. The Swamiji now proceeded on a pilgrimage to Amar Nath. With his health completely shattered, he now began to lead a retired life and to train his disciples in *Dhyan* and *Dharana* (meditation and concentration) In the year of his death he was invited to

take a leading and prominent part in the religious conference that was to be held in Japan, but by his sudden death every scheme of his was frustrated.

Before his second visit to America he has attacked with diabetes; symptoms of decay were noticed in his system; he was placed under many forms of treatment, but to no effect. This disease ate into the vitals of his life. He suffered from this disease till his death on the 4th July, 1902.

On the day of his death he meditated in a room for several hours in the morning and sang one of the favourite songs of his Master. The inmates of the *Math* were charmed at this song; after dinner at noom he taught *Panini* and *Yajur Veda* (Vedic grammar and prose part of the Vedas) for three hours, and in the afternoon walked for about a mile and a half.

After dusk he went upstairs to meditate; according to the advice of Dr. Sanders he was not permitted to remain alone, and a disciple of his went upstairs with him; Swamiji told him, to be a little aloof as he would now meditate; he had been waiting at a distance on the terrace for about an hour when Swamiji called him, and expressed the desire to take rest, and told him to fan him a little as he was feeling hot; he lay down with the rosary in his hands, and fell fast asleep shortly; he slept for about an hour, and afterwards groaned like a child, and then his life became extinct; thus he expired at the premature age of forty.

The scenes in which his death is laid, lend a charm and pathos to it. Imagine for a moment the sylvan scene, soft breeze stealing from the south and wooing on its way, every bud and flower fringing the border of the *Bhageerathee* (Ganges), a dead calm, and silence all arounds, broken at interval, by the 'nightly sorrow' of the nightingale, the river keeping up a low perpetual murmur near by, the sky shrouded in darkness, so dark that it could be felt, all these, and amidst these scenes, Lo,

'Vital Spark of heavenly flame !
Quit, oh quit, this mortal frame.'

These associations are really in the language of Rev. Pattison, 'ingredients of the dream on Parnassus'. In fact, the imagination kindles into reverie and rapture. These associations breathed a grace and charm into the grimness of death.

Vivekananda has gone in the deepest hush of night to meet his Master who had been awaiting him in "lands invisible beyond the grave.' His sudden death took us by surprise; we heard with frozen wonder that our beloved Swamiji is no more. We do not know whether we are to be sorry, or to rejoice over his death, for he has 'passed from death to life.' We do not know whether we should lament, or say, with George Canning, 'Mount Sinless Spirit to thy destined rest.' His death is indeed a national calamity and a heavy loss to the country, alike to his nearest and dearest, though, 'his is the gain, but ours the pain.'

HIS IDEAS

Let us pass on to the chief ideas propagated by him. We remember to have read in his *Karma Yoga*, 'Unity in variety is the plan of creation.' This is a universal law, and it holds good both in the material and mental world. We find the very law repeated in *Cosmos*, a great work by Alexander Von Humboldt, one of the greatest of scientists and philosophers of Germany. He says, 'The aspect of external nature, as it presents itself in its generality to the thoughtful contemplation, is that of unity in diversity, and of connection, resemblance, and order among created things most dissimilar in their form—one fair harmonious whole.'

Next comes the idea of sin. The Swamiji used to say that we should not consider ourselves sinners. He has said in his lecture at Chicago, 'You are souls immortal, spirits free and blest and eternal. Ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter.' According to him we are *Amritasya Putra etc.* (the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings, etc)

Swamiji used to hold that we are not an insignificant portion of the creative plan. The idea of man's infinite littleness was shocking to him. We do not know how far is this doctrine philosophically, or spiritually sound, but its importance from a utilitarian point of view cannot be exaggerated.

Another idea of Swamiji is very significant,—that every one is great in his own sphere. Suppose you are a rich man; you are born with a silver spoon in your mouth, whereas a sweeper in the street is born in abject poverty. In consequence of this, you have no right to think that you are greater than the sweeper; nay,

even the sweeper may be greater than you if he discharges his duty well, whereas you fail to do your duty. This is indeed a grand idea.

Let us pass on to another idea, that there is essence in all religions, all are true. This idea, (—and what was not !)—was included by his Master long before, and he took up the cue from him This is clearly expressed in his lecture at Brooklyn : 'If one creed alone were to be true, and all the others untrue, you would have again to say that, that religion is diseased. If one religion is true, all the others must be true.' Swamiji used to hold that religion formulated in dogmas and doctrines, whereas not carried out in practice, is of no avail whatever, in fine is useless. This, we have noticed before, was the corner-stone of his ideas taken as a whole.

Swamiji's idea of Evolution may probably be called the centre towards which all his ideas converge. He says that the rising from the lower state to the higher is not due to any addition but an emanation, or a manifestation from within. To express it briefly, it is manifestation of the Divinity by its own nature. Swamiji says, 'The momentum is not from outside, but comes from inside. It is the very nature of things to manifest themselves.' 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest the divinity within by controlling nature, external or internal.' His idea of Evolution is not the same as is accepted by the modern thoughtful world, for he says, "These competitions and struggles and evils that we see are not the effect of the involution or the cause, but they are in the way. If they did not exist, still man would go on, and evolve as God, because it is the very nature of God to come out and manifest Himself. To my mind, this seems hopeful, instead of that horrible idea of competition The more I study history, the more I find that idea to be wrong. Some say that if man did not fight with man, he would not progress. I used to think so; but I find now that every war has thrown back human progress by fifty years instead of hurrying it forward. The day will come when man will study history from a different light and find that competition is neither the cause, nor the effect, simply things on the way, not necessary to creation at all. The theory of *Patanjali* (one of the propounders of six principal Indian Philosophic systems) is the only theory I think a rational man can accept. How much evil the modern system causes !'

We are sorry we do not find our way to accept these views from which we dissent.

Swamiji has defined Soul, Death and God in the following aphorisms :

> 'Soul is a circle whose circumstances is nowhere (limitless), but whose centre is in some body. Death is but a change of centre. God is a circle whose circumference is nowhere and whose centre everywhere When we can get out of the limited centre of body, we shall realize God, our true self.'

In the *Karma Yoga* we come across the following . 'Every man should take up his own ideal and endeavour to accomplish it; that is a surer way of progress than taking up other men's ideals which he can never hope to accomplish.' This is very true. This is the surer way to individual expansion.

The spiritual life has its different stages of growth, and as such will thrive unequality under different conditions. The food which is necessary and sufficient for the rearing up of a child is found insufficient for the same purpose in the case of an adult. If different conditions, or stages of growth play such an important part in the physical world, why should they do not so in the spiritual world ? Our forefathers attached much importance to this very significant fact, and hence have enjoined upon us different modes of life according to its growth. This very fact underlies our caste system, however degenerated it may be now.

In the *Jnana Yoga*, Swami has very elaborately discussed the cosmic problems in the lecture on Cosmos. We cannot resist the temptation of quoting the following passage which beautifully summarises his explanation of Cosmos :

> 'Now then, what do we see ? That the beginning of all the manifesiations of this cosmic energy, call it by various names, as matter, or thought, or force, or intelligence or whatever names you choose to give it, is simply the manifestation of that cosmic intelligence, or as we shall call Him henceforth, the Supreme Lord. Everything that you see, or feel, or hear, is His creation, to be a little more accurate, is His projection; still more accurate, the Lord Himself. It is He who is shining as the Sun and the stars. He is the mother earth; He is the

ocean Himself. He comes as gentle showers. He is the gentle breeze that we breathe, and He it is, who is working as force in the body He is the speech that speaks. He is the man who is talking; He is the audience that is here. He is the platform on which I stand; He is the light that enables me to see your faces. It is all He. He Himself is both the material and the efficient cause of this Universe, and He it is, that gets involved in the minute cell and evolves at the other end, and becomes God again. This is the mystery of the Universe.'

The Swamiji has on many occasions described Paramhansa, as the incarnation of Divinity, come down to the earth to fulfil the pledge contained in the *Geeta*, '*Yada Yadarhi Dharmasya Glanirbhabati, Bharata* etc.' (Whenever religion subsides etc.)

He has said in his well-known address at the residence of Rajah Radhakant Deb Bahadur to the following effect, 'If the nation wants to rise, it will have to come enthusiastically round *his* name. Him I place before you and it is for you to judge.'

We fail to understand what he really means by this. Does he mean that the national salvation lies in the acceptance of Paramhansa as the incarnation of Divinity, or does he want the nation to assimilate only the spirit of his teachings ? We raise this doubt frankly, for we apprehend rank idolatory has already gained access into the minds of his many followers. Ramkrishna Paramhansa has already been given a place in the Hindu Pantheon. We must admit that although we yield to none in our appreciation of hero-worship, we cannot tolerate the worship of a man with the attributes of Divinity ascribed to him. This is pernicious. In this age of Natural Selection, Survival of the Fittest, and Cosmic Emotion, to make religion out of the ideas of incarnation etc. is in the language of Sir Frederic Harrison 'far more extravagant than to make it out of the Equator, or the Binomial Theorem.' We know we are incurring the displeasure of a large section of our community, but '*Magn'na est veri-tas, et praeva-lebit.*'

The roaring lion of the Vedanta kicketh at the jackass of idolatory. From our study of Vivekananda's life we have come to the conclusion that the Swamiji was the staunchest exponent of the *Vedanta* (philosophic appendices of the Vedas) and as such we expect him to be antagonistic to the popular form of idolatory or

even to the conception of personal God, or '*Sagun Brahma*' for does he not say in the *Jnana Yoga*, 'Great thinking persons, people who at least are thought to be great thinkers by the world, get disgusted at the idea of impersonality; but to me it seems so ludicrous, so low, so vulgar, if I may say, so blasphemous. It is very good for children to think of God as an embodied man. It is pardonable in a child, but not in a grown-up man, thoughtful man or woman to think that God is a man or woman or so forth. . . ., on the other hand, the Impersonal God is a living God whom I see before me, a principle.' (Jnana Yoga, p. 220, First Edition —*Udbodhan Series*).

The above lines unmistakably express Vivekananda's conception of Divinity; and hence his setting up of Paramhansa as God embodied in human form seems to us an anomaly. This anomaly can, however, be explained away by considering that the utterances alluded to about Paramhansa, were those of a disciple about his *Guru* who according to Hindu traditions is a veritable deity—'*Akhanda Mandalakaram Byaptam Jena Characharam*, etc.' (the form which is infinite and pervades the univere, etc.)

What the Swamiji calls 'a principle' in his *Jnana Yoga* is according to Herbert Spencer, 'An Infinite Eternal energy from which all things proceed. It has not mind; it has not will; its attributes are negative, the Ultimate Reality, transcending all thought' (C.F., '*Aprapya Manasa Saha*, etc.')

We admire the method in which Vivekananda has discussed the most subtle spiritual problems; they are discussed from a scientific point of view. This is the spirit of the age His *Raja Yoga* registers the high watermark of this method. We wholly agree with Prof. Tyndall's memorable words, 'Science shall wrest from theology the entire domain of cosmological theory.'

If we are to sum up in one word the teaching that Vivekananda sought to instil into our minds we must say it is *Brahmacharya* (ascetic life with particular stress on abstinence).

Since the days of Raja Ram Mohan Ray no teacher pleaded *Brahmacharya* with so much emphasis as the late Swamiji. Although we do not accept all his teachings, we candidly confess that it is this intense practicability of his teachings that has a charm of its own, of which mere theorists have no idea. The following lines from a poem of his very clearly express his idea of *Brahmacharya* :

'Truth never comes where lust
and fame and greed
Of gain reside. No man who
thinks of woman
As his wife can ever perfect be.'

Many raise the objection that Swami Vivekananda did harm to society by giving up the worldly ties; they say that he might have achieved wonders if he had remained in the world. In many passages he has indirectly vindicated his renunciation. He says that some people are for *Tyag* or renunciation, and others are for *Bhoga* or enjoyment. Each has his own destiny to perform, each has his own peculiar path chalked out for him; if a man be made for renunciation he will fare very badly in the world, and similarly a man who is made for this world cannot fare well in renunciation This is a natural law, as universal as the Law of Gravitation itself. The great philosopher David Hume understood fully the soundness of this law. He has said in one of his Essays, 'Nor can a rational soul, made for the contemplation of the Supreme Being and of His works, ever enjoy, tranquility or satisfaction, while detailed in the ignoble pursuits of sensual pleasures or popular applause.'

Our attention was struck a few days ago, by a remark that the Swamiji would have made a good lawyer, if he so willed. We think this remark to be utterly erroneous, for it gives the lie direct to his mental constitution. He would not have been other than what he was, for his was an organic mind.

Let us turn for a moment to his conception of womanhood. Women were to him sacred. An American woman, owner of several millions, once asked him to marry her; she said that she would sign a contract to the effect that she would not induce him to indulge in the gratification of sensual pleasures, and that she would simply enjoy poetry of life. To this the Swamiji replied, 'why shall I marry, when I see the manifestation of Divine Mother in every woman '

Vivekananda's regard for his *Guru* was wonderful; he has declared himself to be 'the most unworthy of his servants.' Let us quote a few lines from his lecture delivered at Madras : 'Let me conclude by saying that if in my life I have told one word of truth it was his and his alone, and if I have told you many things which

were not true, correct, and beneficial to the human race, it was all mine, and on me is the responsibility.' He wrote to a friend of his, 'It is better to leave everything in his hands of him who is at my back leading me.' Let us narrate the following incident which describes his regard for his *Guru* Swamiji, while touring through India as a *Paribrajak* (mendicant traveller), came to Swami Bhaskarananda of Benaras, while talking with him on the destruction of the senses, Swami Bhaskarananda declared that it is impossible to annihilate the senses. The Swamiji boldly asserted to his face that his *Guru*, at whose feet he had the privilege to sit, had completely annihilated his senses, and that if any body brought a piece of metal in contact with his hand, it was invariably paralysed. To this Bhaskarananda replied, 'Your *Guru* was a cheat, a charlatan.' Upon this Swamiji, young as he was, remonstrated with Bhaskarananda in whose presence ordinary people dared not utter a word.

We shall conclude this chapter with the mention of another characteristic feature of the Swamiji's teachings—that our conduct of life should be uncompromising This habit of compromise, this suppleness of nature, is most fatal to our 'inward growth.' Those who are fortunate in having any contact with the Swamiji, while he was alive, know full well that his teachings smack of stoicism, which is essentially necessary for the rising of a nation as it is equally necessary in the case of an individual.

THE PATRIOT

The life of Swami Vivekananda was a living illustration of the ascendency of spirit over matter. It is a disgrace to our vaunted civilisation that we have done nothing practically to consecrate his memory It is as it should be. For, steeped in soulless materialism as we are, how can we do homage to one who rose above matter, and established his supremacy over it ? It gives us pain to see our hero 'by strangers honoured and by strangers mourned.' Verily has Christ said, 'No prophet is honoured in his own country.' It is a pitiable sight to see our brethren of the southern part of India, pour forth the full exuberance of their hearts in his name, whereas we do not pay him even our grudging thanks.

It is a disgrace that his memorial meeting has shared the fate of meetings of this sort, and has produced no result as yet. Had

he been born in a country other than India, a statue would have been erected to perpetuate his memory and he would have been canonized a saint; but, here, by the strange irony of fate, everything is to the contrary, and Swami Vivekananda is dead quite unrecognised by us. The reason is not far to seek; for, he had not the suave pretensions and his whole life was a crusade against hypocrisy; he was not a man of religious cant. We have heard him speak on many occasions, in terms of fire, against the hypocrites, and his thrusts were principally levelled against those who 'face the world with a brazen front of assumed honour.' He did not care for 'the world's contempt—a bagatelle'.

The Swami Vivekananda is now in the lands of the 'spirits elect', and does not care whether we offer our tribute of respect or not, whether any 'polished marble emulates his face', or 'hallowed dirge is muttered over his ashes.'

It is a matter of great regret that a certain big man of this country declined to preside over his memorial meeting simply because his views on religion were at variance with those of Swamiji's. As we knew the Swamiji for several years, and as we made it a point to study him with scrutiny, let us first point out that he had no narrow creed. His creed is universal and may suit all. He had a great dislike for narrow dogmas. This he has said repeatedly. He was simply an apostle of truth. Truth was welcome to him from whatever quarter it came.

But even if we admit doctrinal difference, why should we lose sight of the other phase of his character which is nonetheless important ? It is the spirit of patriotism and the 'sympathetic touch of nature which makes the whole world kin.' Even to a careless reader his writings and lectures breathe the spirit of patriotism Although he did not publicly identify himself with any public organisation, yet he was a patriot to his backbone. Even his rankest detractors would admit this. Who can shed tears for his country ? While in Germany he burst into tears, seeing the opulence of that country as contrasted with the povery of India. Very aptly has Sister Nivedita remarked in an article contributed to the Hindu of Madras, that 'the occident with all its luxuries, had no charms. To him the garb of a beggar, the lanes of Calcutta, and the disabilities of his own people were more dear than all the glory of the foreigner'. This will be more manifest to the readers if they would refer to the following lines culled from

the conclusion of the *Bartaman Bharat* :

> "Oh India ! with this mere echoing of others, with this base imitation of others, with this dependence on others, the weakness of the salve, this vile detestable tyranny (or class and caste) wouldst thou—with these only, scale the heights for high power ? Wouldst thou attain, by means of this disgraceful cowardice that freedom which the brave and the heroic alone can attain ?
>
> O India ! Forget not that the ideal of thy womanhood is Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, forget not that the God thou worshippest is the great Ascetic of ascetics, the all-renouncing Sankara, the Lord of Uma, forget not that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for sense-pleasure, are not for thy individual personal happiness; forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother's altar; forget not that thy social order is but the reflex of the infinite universal Motherhood; forget not that the lower classes, the sweepers, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian—and proudly proclaim, 'I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother'. Say, 'The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahmin Indian, the Pariah Indian is my brother.' Thou, too, clad with but a rag round thy loins, proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice, 'The Indian is my brother, the India is my life, India's gods and goddesses are my God, India's society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Varanasi of my old age.' Say, brother, 'The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good' and repeat and pray day and night, 'O Thou Lord of Gauri, O Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me ! O Thou Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and make me a man' !"

This passage is one among many expressing the love for his country to the improvement of which he dedicated his life. Though he had not the pert loquacity of the so-called patriots, he, in our opinion, was the greatest patriot of modern times. It was at his express will that the relief works were taken in hand by the Ramkrishna Mission in different famine-stricken districts of India.

When, Sister Nivedita and others were disinfecting the plague-infected quarters of Calcutta, the Swamiji said that he was ready even to sell his *Math* to meet the expenses.

We remember vividly his face beaming with inspiration, when he was advising us, a few students assembled together, about ten years ago, to the following effect, 'What good is there if your practice *Yoga*, while your brethren die of starvation ? Go abroad; help the needy; succour the poor, and make country a honeycomb, as it were'.

The Swamiji was an optimist even when the prospect was gloomy; to him the future of India was not shrouded in dismal darkness.

The Swamiji used to say that the system of education imparted by our university is faulty, and is, to a great extent, bar to the awakening of national consciousness for foreign ideas and ideals are set before the students to emulate from their very childhood; by this, they imbibe a natural hatred for all that is national; he used to say that to rise in the scale of nations we should not lose sight of the glorious traditions of our past history but should be fully alive to them.

The representative of the *Prabuddha Bharat* asked, 'Then what you really desire is national efficiency' ? The Swamiji replied, 'Certainly. Can you adduce any reason why India should lie in the ebb-tide of the Aryan nations ? Is the inferior in intellect ? Is she inferior in dexterity ? Can you look at her art, at her Mathematics, at her philosophy, and answer 'Yes' ? All that is needed is that she would de-hypnotize herself, and wake up from her age-long sleep to take her true rank in the hierarchy of nations'.

Vivekananda had a great regard for Pundit Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar, and Dr Jagadish Chandra Bose, and used to say men like Dr. Bose are needed to work out the salvation of India.

We have often found the Swamiji to impress upon his countrymen the necessity of developing the resources of the country; he expressed the desire to give effect to it by sending young men to Japan and America for technical education.

Swamiji's motto was *Uttisthata, Jagrata etc.*, (Arise, awake, struggle on till the goal is reached, etc.). Truly, it does credit to the remark of the Englishman, that the Swamiji 'seemed more like a warrior than a priest'. The following extracts from his private letters will bear this out ;

To a doctor at Madras :

'For us is submission calm, and perfect; the soldier has no right to complain, nay murmur, if the general orders him into the cannon's mouth'. To another friend, 'Come Lord, come thou, the greatest teacher who has taught us that the soldier is only to obey and speak not. Come Lord, come !' In another letter, 'I have a call from above; I see no ways but his eyes see, and I must stick to my guns'.

The following extracts from his private letters clearly express his characteristic boldness :

'The wave has risen; nothing will be able to resist its tridal fury; do not be sorry, do not despond if I am slow in writing. The spirit, my boys, the spirit; the love, my children, the love; the faith, the belief and fear not, the greatest sin in fear'. In another part, 'Believe, believe, the decree has gone, the fiat of the Lord has gone—India must rise, the mass, the poor are to be made happy, and rejoice that you are the chosen instruments in His hands'.

SHOWS THE WAY

The Swami Vivekananda was a champion of mass education; he strongly believed that the mass is the soul, the centre of force of the nation; a nation whose mass is corrupt and degraded is sure to lag behind, and can not rise in the scale of nations at all; in his opinion, the mass should be elevated, noble ideas and thoughts should be introduced into it; noble ideas should be set before it to emulate. The Swamiji was eager to rouse the sleeping individuality in the mass.

The following extracts from a letter of his will clearly express his view on mass education : 'Remember the noble gist of our force—elevation of the masses without ignoring the religion at all; remember that the nation lives in the cottage, but alas ! nobody ever did anything for them. The fate of a nation depends upon the condition of the masses. Can you raise them ? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature ? Can you become an occidental of

occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work and energy, at the same time Hindu to the backbone in religious culture and instincts ? That is surely to be done, and we will do it; you are all born to do it. Have faith in yourselves, great convictions are the mothers of great deeds. Onward forever; sympathy for the poor, down-trodden, even unto death. This is our motto. Onward brave lads.'

In his letter to His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore, he has suggested some practical hints in imparting mass education; these hints are very practical and ensure the success of his scheme of mass education. We give below an extract from his letter to the Maharaja :

> 'The only thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the conditions of the poor. The poor in the West are devils, ours are angels, and it is therefore so much the easier to raise our poor. The only thing to be done for our lower classes is to give them education to develop their lost individuality. That is the great task before our people and princes. Up-to-date nothing has been done in that direction. Priest-power, foreign conquest have trodden them for centuries under their feet, and at last the poor of India have forgotten they are human beings. They are to be given ideas. Their eyes to be opened to see what is going on in the world around them, and they will work their own salvation. Every nation, every man, every woman must work one's own salvation. The only help they require is to give them ideas, and then the rest will follow as the effect. Our duty is to put ideas into their heads, they will do the rest. This is what is to be done in India. It was this idea that has been in my mind for a long time. I could not accomplish it in India, and that was the reason of my coming to this country.'
>
> 'The great difficulty of educating the poor is this. Supposing even your Highness opens a free school in every village, still it could do no good, for the poverty of India is such that the poor boys will rather to go help their fathers in the fields or otherwise try to make a living than come to the school. Now if mountain does not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain. If the poor boys cannot come to Education, Education must go to them, Now there are thousands of

single minded self-sacrificing *Sannyasins* (mendicants) in our country going from village to village teaching religion. If a part of them be organised as teachers also of secular things, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a camera and a map etc., they can teach a great deal of Astronomy and Geography to the ignorant, and also by telling stories about different nations and of the people of every country, they can give them hundred times more information through the ears than the poor can get in a life-time through books. Now this requires an organisation, which again means money. I have men enough in India to work for me; but alas ! no money. It is greatly difficult to set a wheel in motion, and then is goes with accelerated velocity.'

'After seeking full help in my own country, and failing to get any sympathy from the rich I came over to this country through your Highness' help. My noble Prince ! the life is short, the vanities of the world transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive. One such high, noble-minded, and royal son of India as your Highness, can put it on its feet again, and then leave a name to posterity which shall be worshipped as God. May the Lord make your noble heart feel intensely for the suffering millions of India sunk in ignorance, is the prayer of

Vivekananda.'

Swami Vivekanda discerned a canker that has been eating into the vitals of national progress; he saw that much energy is uselessly used up in the discussion of caste, that much energy which would otherwise have been of some service is uselessly dissipated and frittered away; he suggested that some noble ideas should be introduced into society. He writes to a friend, 'whether caste shall come or go I have nothing to do, my idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest, the noble ideas that the human race has developed both, in and out of India, and let them think for themselves, whether there should be no caste or not, whether women should be perfectly free or not, I have nothing to do. Liberty in thought and action is the only condition of life, growth and well-being; where it does not exist, the man, the race

and the nation must go down; any clan, or caste, or nation or institution which bars the power of free thought and action of an individual, so long as it does not injure others, in devilish and must go down My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of every body, and then men or women will settle their own fate Let them know what our forefathers have thought, and other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see what others are doing, now especially, and let them decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallisation would be done by nature according to her laws '

We do not wish to point out to our readers the intellectual attainments of Vivekananda. Dr. Wright, Professor of Greek in the Harvard University wrote, 'He is more learned than all of us together.' His masterly style of English and his eloquence have been spoken of, in terms of praise, by many leading organs of public opinion in England and America. His contribution to the Bengali literature is not to be overlooked. The editor of the *Sahitya* was so charmed at his article which we know was his first attempt, that he wrote, 'verily, genius is all-absorbing.'

His style was peculiarly his own. He often used to say that he would write in diction in which we express our ideas, he did not countenance the style of the *academical pharisees*. He wished to do away with the unnecessary ornamentation and useless flourish of rhetoric, bespeaking insincerity of heart. This will be manifest to us if we read his *Bartaman Bharat* or *Bilat Jatrir Patra*. His articles in *Bartaman Bharat* covering about seventy pages and in *Prachya O' Paschatya* are really marvels in the history of Bengali literature.

His style is marked by a harmonious blending of sombre and humorous tone. He is speaking very grandly, suddenly we are dazzled by some brilliant flashes of humour. His descriptions of Europe are characterised by faithful accuracy and consummate truthfulness.

His contributions to the Bengali literature are important from another point of view—their richness in allusions to past and contemporary history; and this very fact has rendered his articles unapproachable to ordinary readers. His *forte* lay in the comparative study of history. His eye of genius could discern at the root of ordinary incidents, elements of civilisation which are invisible

to our grosser eyes.

The Swamiji had a happy knack of expressing himself clearly. he always aimed at this. In consequence of this, his expressions are remarkably clear, even sometimes bordering on direct attack.

His study of history was not desultory; for this, he began to learn French, of his he acquired a smattering knowledge. His knowledge of Sanskrit was not skin-deep, even on the day of his death he taught *Panini* and *Yajur Veda* for three hours. We have read several Sanskrit verses composed by him.

The three master minds of the last century Raja Ram Mohan Ray, Keshub Chunder Sen and the Swami Vivekananda resemble one another in their literary turn of mind. Raja Ram Mohan Ray is the father of Bengali prose, Keshub Chander Sen brought about effective reforms in the Bengali literature, and the Swami Vivekananda only took the initiative to effect wholesome reforms in our literature when he was cut off in the prime of his life. What little service the Swamiji has rendered to our mother tongue is sure to be appraised at its true value by the future generation.

The style of Keshub Chunder Sen smells, as it were, of the sweet odour of incense offered to the deity, that of Vivekananda smells of gun-powder. Keshub strikes the lyre; Vivekananda blows the horn—but the sound emitted is not granting to the ear.

Keshub and Vivekananda had the same mission, they struck the same key-note, though they played on different instruments. Both, in the language of Carlyle had 'a soul like an Aeolian harp, in whose strings the vulgar wind, as it passed through them, changed itself into articulate melody.'

Vivekananda was more akin to Raja Ram Mohan Ray than to Keshub Chunder Sen. When we study the life of Raja Ram Mohan Ray we are awed and dazzled into admiration at the versatility of his genius; such versatility is rare in any country; we come across the same type of versatility in the life of Vivekananda.

The Swami Vivekananda, always in thought and action, strove hard to build the superstructure of India's salvation in which will reign for ever 'Equality, Fraternity and Liberty.' To quote his own words, 'Liberty of thought, and action is the only condition of life.' This thought dissipated the stores of his nerve-power, and brought on early decay and death. His life, like Milton's was enkindled with the 'hallowed fire of the altar of God' It was this fire that consumed his life.

Men of Vivekananda's type are born in advance of the state of their countrymen, they are precursors to a new dawn, a new state which evolves out of their ideas

Though Vivekananda is no more, his life will serve as a beacon-light to us struggling in the tempestuous fury of heavy surfs and black squalls of temptations, enabling us to weather out the storm successfully, and hence preventing us from being wrecks cast on the shores of ruin

When we consider all the qualities that the Swami Vivekananda was endowed with, we are forced to exclaim with the poet,

> '. . . . the elements
> So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up,
> And say to all the world This was a man '

23

VIVEKANANDA : THE NATION-BUILDER

SWAMI AVYAKTANANDA

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

The problem of all problems in India today is to build up an Indian nation by organising the thoughts and activities of the country on a solid basis, in full conformity with the spiritual culture of India To accomplish this work of constructive nation-building from within is not an easy task for us. Still we must spare no pains to begin the work inspite of all the difficulties lying in the way It is a happy sign of the times that this problem of nation-building has stirred the imagination of the best and most thoughtful minds of our land, and they are all eager to formulate an all-comprehensive scheme of work for focussing the scattered forces of the country.

The conflict between the cultures of the East (India) and the West has given rise to many serious issues in addition to the national draw-backs of India There is no denying the fact that we have to assimilate many things from Western civilisation. Yet we must be cautious enough to winnow out what is bad and detrimental to the mission that India wants to fulfil in her collective pursuits. This nationalism of the West has received so much attention from the educated Indians that they have failed to recognise properly the nation-building elements still existing in our country.[1]

Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda is well-known throughout the cultured world as a powerful Hindu missionary who vindicated the spiritual glory of India even in lands other than his own.[2] Glorious has been his spiritual mission to the peoples of other climes, but equally glorious has been his message to his own people for working out a constructive programme to build the nation from within. He has placed the ideal of spirituality not only as a means of individual liberation or *Moksha*, but also as a fundamental principle through which the collective thoughts and activities of the land are to be organised To him religion is the nation-builder in India; it is the supreme organising factor of national activities. He has laid down that the political, social and economic reconstruction in India must be made along a line altogether different from that in other countries of the world. He has interpreted our past history with a rare insight and vision drawing our attention to the wonderful principles of nation-building in Indian civilisation and culture, and showing the practical bearing of those principles on the solution of the vital problems agitating our mind today. The fundamental principle of national reconstruction in India has been indicated by the Swami in one of his lectures as follows :

> "National union in India must be the gathering up of the scattered spiritual forces. A nation in India must be the union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune."

Nation in India and Europe

The term "Nation" has become so important to us because of the domination of Western culture in the country. It essentially means groups of individuals who have organised all their thoughts and activities on a definite basis with a definite end in view towards which their entire scheme of life as worked out in their political, social, economic, religious and educational institutions must tend. Nations have been built in the West in accordance with this conception mainly on the basis of politics. In the East modern Japan has followed in the foot-steps of Western peoples and organised her collective life, probably at the cost of her spiritual inheritance.[3] The term "Nation" is generally understood by us it is in the West, is only a political sense. And

therefore nationalism and nation-building in India have come to signify organisation of our thoughts and activities mainly on a political basis. But the true significance of Indian nationalism as we shall presently see, is not merely political but cultural and spiritual.

The question that faces the country at the very outset is whether in ancient India there was a nation properly so-called,—in other words, whether India had any basis of her collective life and whether all her thoughts and activities tended towards a definite end as is found in the nations of the West. Those who have made a profound study of her culture and civilisation would decidedly answer in the affirmative. She had her own politics, economics, sociology and all that is essential for the growth and expansion of a race. But the goal of her scheme of national life was not political but spiritual. This type of nationalism is found described in the *Shanti Parva* of the Mahabharata and the *Smriti* Shastras. The principles of life and conduct as embodied in the Shastras were not mere pious sentiments or products of a hyper-ethical imagination, but were the results of centuries of successful experiments in nation-building They remained as potent factors in moulding the life and aims of the Indian *commune* for several epochs and generations. until many destructive agencies both internal and external paralysed the nation and blurred its spiritual vision.[4] Serious racial problems compelled the people to become obstinately conservative and thus retarded the onward march of the nation. Swami Vivekananda has sought to put the Indian people to this traditional track and point out to them the means of realising these principles of life and conduct under modern conditions. His nationalism is not novel to Indian life and thought. It is only restatement of our time-honoured nationalism which will fulfil India's mission to the modern world.

The United India

Swami Vivekananda came in contact with the wonderful Brahmin priest of Dakshineshwar whose life was a living commentary on the ancient Hindu religion and a grand synthesis of the apparently hostile creeds of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. Equipped with what Western education can offer unto an Indian youth, Swami Vivekananda sat at the feet of the Prophet of harmony. This marks the happy blending of ancient and

modern India. The synthetic teachings of Ramakrishna, the various experiences gathered by the swami during his long tours throughout India, his study of Western institutions, his spiritual insight and intellectual culture, his penetrative vision into the history of India, and his comparative study of the East and the West made him singularly competent to realise the soul of India and devise the means for her fullest expression. It was a momentous day for modern India when the Swami returned to India after delivering the message of the Vedanta to the West. There was no definite scheme of work before the country then. He was the first man to conceive the idea of the United India on a spiritual basis and to give a definite programme of work to his countrymen. He discovered that the life-blood of the Indian nation is spirituality and consequently delivered his message to modern India as follows :

> "When the blood is strong and pure, no disease germs can live in that body. Our life-blood is spirituality. If it flows clear, if it flows strong and pure and vigorous, everything is right; political, social, any other material defects, even the poverty of the land will all be cured if that blood is pure. For if the disease-germ is thrown out, nothing will be able to enter into the blood."

TWO NATIONAL BASES

The two fundamental bases upon which Swami Vivekananda laid the greatest emphasis are first, the spirituality of the race; and secondly, the un-cared-for masses of our country. In the dynamic spirituality of India the Swami found the supreme organising factor of our collective life, political, social or otherwise.[5] In the poor toiling masses of India, he discovered that vital force which can revivify and reconstruct India from the bottom to the top. Aggressive spirituality is the philosophic basis of his nationalism; and the Indian masses form its material basis.[6]

Religion in India

That religion has exerted a tremendous influence on our individnal and national life is an undeniable fact of Indian history.

While personalities like Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon and others of the same type have arrested the attention of the peoples of Western countries, the people of India have been from time immemorial moulding and guiding their life strictly in accordance with the ideas and ideals of sublime teachers like Rama, Krishna. Buddha, Kavir, Chaitanya, and others Various religious movements were started by saints and prophets, enjoining necessary socio-political duties and obligations of life and transforming the entire mental make-up of the people. This religion has a marked socio-political phase of its own which strikes even a superficial observer of our history. In the rise of the Mahrattas, the Sikhs and the Rajputs, we distinctly observes how the dynamic religion of India spontaneously shapes and moulds society and politics. Thus it is clearly perceived how religion has, from the dim past down to the present age, remained the governing principle of our collective activities as also the chief end to which these activities have been directed.

The flourishing condition, in days of yore, of the Indian collective life based on religion may be gathered from the ancient inscriptions. Fuller details of these inscriptions substantiate the principles and methods of our national reconstruction found in the various *Smriti* Shastras. They clearly demonstrate how the socio-civic life of the people was organised on the basis of religion, with the least initiative of the State. The interesting records of local self-government developed by the people of the Deccan will be an eye-opener to all who seek for state initiative in all the affairs of a people. So the supreme organising principles given in the *Shanti-Parva* of the Mahabharata are not to be rejected as so many pious sentiments in view of the many positive evidences of our history.[7] What the State has done in Europe through the agency of politics to organise the life of the people, religion has done in India to build up the Indian nation. Swami Vivekananda has emphasised the importance of the religious basis which alone can bring back to India her past glory and has warned us against making her a replica of the West.

The people of India nurtured for ages on such spiritual traditions can not work along political lines without losing the soul. It is not desirable to lead them to a path, foreign to their national genius and tradition. It is spirituality that inspired them to organise and co-ordinate the secular aspects of life; and if

today reform is needed in any sphere of Indian life, that must be done by and through the fundamental principles of religion. For, our masses can realise no other organising principle of life, and all our attempts to awaken them by imbuing them with political consciousness will either prove futile or do harm to them. The Swami therefore said, "Do you want that the Ganges should go backs to its icy bed and begin a new course ? Even if that were possible, it would be impossible for this country to give up here characteristic course of religious life and take up for herself a new career of politics or something else."

None can gainsay the inherent power of spirituality in shaping and moulding the destiny of mankind. In the history of the world spirituality has been a potent factor in transforming a barbarian people into a civilised nation.[8] Happily for India, spirituality has been the coveted goal of her people while worldly enjoyment has been the avowed ideal of other nations, particularly those of the West. Spirituality has been the great message of Indian civilisation and culture to humanity at large. And at a critical juncture of her history, our sole duty is to organise the life of our people in strict conformity with the noble mission that India is destined to fulfil. The Swami clearly explained this in these words :

> "I see that each nation, like each individual, has one theme in this life which is its centre, the principal note round which every other note comes to form the harmony. In one nation political power is its vitality as in England, artistic life in another, and so on. In India religious life forms the centre, the key note of the whole music of national life; and if any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality, the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries—that nation dies, if it succeeds in the attempt. And therefore, if you succeed in the attempt to throw off religion and take up either politics or society or any other thing as your centre, as the vitality of your national life, the result will be that you will be extinct."

Failure of Political Nationalism

A great re-action against political nationalism has already set in the Europe. Some profound thinkers of Europe have lost all

faith in a system of political wire-pulling masked under the name of democracy. They are all eager to introduce a root-and-branch reform in Europe.[9] Modern Europe lacks that moral and spiritual integrity which is essentially required for the establishment of real democracy. The selfish nations have failed to realise the significance of equality, liberty and fraternity, and all are fighting for the lion's share of material enjoyment. As the surest remedy, this root-evil must be effectually removed. Unless and until the ideal and methods of political nationalism are fully destroyed, there is no hope for Europe So here in all our national movements in India having a political aim, time has come for us to cry halt. The political nationalism which India has been trying for years to emulate has been violently opposed by savants like Tolstoy, Romain Rolland,[10] Bertand Russell, George Russell (A.E.) and others. And in this psychological moment of our history let us not forget the warning given by Swami Vivekananda.

> "What guarantee have we that this or any civilisation will last unless it is based on religion, on the goodness of men ? Depend on it, religion goes to the root of the matter. If it is all right, all is right."

The People

In our social and religious movements of the nineteenth century, the Swami found two inherent draw-backs, and the lesson that he learnt from them taught him to make his programme of work absolutely free from the two defects as far as possible. The first defect was that those movements mainly drew their inspiration from the revolutionary ideas of the West, and consequently were not truly national in character.[11] Secondly, they could touch only the educated classes; and the masses, the true back-bone of the nation, were outside their pale. The Swami, on his part, wanted to inaugurate a movement based on the high spiritual idealism of India, which would assimilate the best thoughts and ideas of the Western nations. His programme of work, unlike the previous ones, must undoubtedly begin with the masses of India, so long neglected and overlooked. The problem of the masses was of absorbing interest to the Swami, and the cry that instinctively rose to his lips was "People." He saw

in the Indian masses a sleeping leviathan, and the dream of his life was to awaken this sleeping giant to self-consciousness. Thus in formulating his plan of work for India, he kept the masses in the forefront He gave vent to the deepest feeling of his heart when he said to one of his dearest disciples "Never forget the words,—'Woman' and 'People'."

The Swami did not believe in patch-work. He wanted a complete transformation of thoughts and activities in India. In a word, he wanted radical reform in every sphere of life. This reform as conceived by the Swami was to come through the spread of the vitalising thoughts of the Vedanta among the masses of India. In a speech in Southern India he said, "Where are those who want reforms ? Make them first. Where are the people ? The tyranny of minorities is the worst tyranny that the world has ever seen. A few men who think that certain things are evils will not make that nation move. Why does not the nation move ? First, educate the nation, and then the law will be forthcoming. Bring it up. You must go down to the basis of things, to the very root of the matter. That is what I call radical reform. Put the fire there and let it burn upwards and make an Indian nation."

The Sudra Problem

The tale of Aryanisation of the whole of India forms one of the most interesting chapters of the cultural history of India.[12] We shall deal with the subject when we discuss the problem of social reconstruction. The ideal before the nation was to organise the thoughts and activities of peoples of various ethnic groups. The Varnashrama with its flexible caste system fulfilled this purpose for long centuries till selfishness crept in and the true spirit of the institution was entirely lost. The priest and the higher orders got the upper hand in every affair of life and the interests of the masses were to a great extent overlooked. The priest began to impose superstitions upon the masses, and the Kshatriyas began to oppress them. When the caste system far from being an instrument for the uplift of the lower orders, became an ingeniously devised structure on which rested the exclusive privileges of the higher classes, a caste-breaker appeared in Lord Buddha, who preached a religion essentially Vedantic in nature to the masses of India. Lord Buddha broke down all

barriers of caste and admitted into religious organisation the aspirants of even the lower castes. One of his dearest disciples was Upali, a barber. From Buddha down to Vivekananda we find in the history of India a hand of religious reformers preaching the gospel of freedom, equality and fraternity among the long-despised masses of our land. Thus Ramanuja from the lofty tower of the temple at Conjeeveram, pronounced the mystic texts before the Pariahs showing thereby that truth is the inherent birth-right of all. The fact that Rani Rasmani, belonging to Sudra caste, had built a temple wherein the most orthodox Brahmin priest lived and preached the Sanatana Dharma greatly impressed the mind of Vivekananda. He was convinced that the outcasts of society were destined to play an important part in building up a great nation in India. At the same time the Swami was fully aware of the serious difficulties in the path of our progress; and like one gazing into the future he once said : "We are to solve the problem of the Sudra, but oh, through what tumults ! through what tumults !" However, despite all difficulties, the one aim of reformers up to comparatively recent times in the history of our country has been to popularise the Vedanta among the masses; and Vivekananda also wanted to disseminate widely the teachings of the Vedanta among the people as an effective remedy for our social evils.

Masses in Europe

As the history of India records the slow but silent penetration of the thoughts of the *Upanishads* into the masses, so the history of Europe reveals the general awakening and growth of the political consciousness of the masses in Western countries with the consequent assertion of political rights by the people. In every country the aristocracies, religious, social and political are digging their grave, and a slow but sure age of real democracy, religious, social and political is being ushered into existence.

In Europe the first upheaval of the masses against the classes took a definite shape in the struggle between the Patricians and the Plebians in the history of Rome. Mediaeval Christianity, preaching the gospel of faith, hope and charity to the masses of Europe, reclaimed them from ignorance, ferocity and barbarism. Still during the Middle Ages the masses were bond-slaves to the barons. The Renaissance also practically contributed nothing

towards the real liberation of the masses. The French Revolution, with its message of liberty, equality and fraternity, was also a purely 'middle class' revolution. The attempt made by the French people in 1973 and 1974 in the equalising of fortunes by different means tended towards socialism, and it was immediately after this epoch-making revolution that the theoretical adherents of Socialism began to make their appearance, propounding the gospel of social uplift. Before the advent of well-organised Capitalism, Labour was wholly unconscious of its potential strength. But Labour continually serving under organised Capitalism came to feel its inherent power and latent strength. Gradually, the social philosophy of Karl Marx with its doctrine of 'Proletariat Revolution' captured the imagination of sympathetic minds and culminated at last in the Russian revolution of 1977. The advanced Labourites and Communists in all countries have this dream of 'Proletariat Revolution' throughout the whole world. With the domination of Western political thoughts over us, these revolutionary ideas have been silently engaging the attention of the educated youngmen of our country. It has become urgently necessary to devise means for the true elevation of the masses in India, so that the high purpose of our national history may not be ignored.

Masses in India

Swami Vivekananda understood fully the spirit of the age and wanted that India should not forget her own type of nationalism as that would lead the masses aright. The Swami was therefore for such a movement as will be in full conformity with the ideals for which India stands before mankind. He analysed the history of the world and discovered the ascendency of the Priest, the Soldier, and the Capitalist in different epochs. He declared that the age of the Sudras had come, and no power on earth could hold back the rising power of the masses. Civilisation first dawned on man with the rise of the Priest who had taught reverence for Truth and God. The inherent drawback of that age lay in the exclusiveness of that class and its monopoly of knowledge. Then came the age of the Military with its liberal view of life; but its defects lay in too much pomp of power and greed of dominion.[13] Then the Capitalist civilisation was the next to rise spreading culture among humanity at large. But its vice lay

in the accumulation of wealth within limited circles, and the corresponding poverty of the masses. The masses, the true basis all civilisations could not raise their heads. They cemented with their life-blood ancient and modern civilisations;[14] but where are they ? Now certainly the age of 'the hewers of wood and the drawers of water' has dawned. Now is the turn of the oppressed millions to rise in the scale of society. The Swami saw the vision of a new spiritual India rising out of humble cottages, the factories and the shops —emerging from the jungles, the hills and the mountains. He heard the awakening song of the masses, the song of a new self-assertion on the basis of Indian spirituality. He said : "My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest, the noble ideas that the human race has developed both in and out of India and leave them think for themselves." The service of suffering humanity was the be-all and the end-all of his life and teaching. This spirit of serving God in man has been bequeathed by him as a legacy to us all.

> "Knowing sure that I have put in a lever for the good of humanity in India at least, which no power can drive back, I will sleep without caring what will be next, and may I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God that I believe in, the sum-total of all souls, and above all, my God the poor of all races, of all species—is the special object of my worship."

SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

Varnasramachara

There are some distinctive features in the Indian social structure built on the basis of spirituality. We must thoroughly study them today so that the ancient sociological principles upon which our society had been founded may be applied under modern conditions of life. The earliest Aryan social system was built up in the region between the Saraswati and the Drisadvati, the two rivers in the Punjab, mentioned in the Vedas. Manu emphatically says that the civilisation and culture and the manners and customs, prevalent in that region should be imitated in all parts

of Aryavarta. It is a subject of controversy whether the so-called Aryan race came from outside at all.[15] So far as the Vedic literature is concerned, we find no clear traces of the Aryan race coming down to India. We only come to know that in that remote age, the whole of Northern India had been inhabited by various conflicting ethnic groups possessing various cultures, diametrically opposed to one another.

Gradually, a race emerged from those ethnic groups, with spiritual potentialities and an introspective outlook on life. It started to analyse human nature in all its complexities, and at last discovered certain fundamental truths in the super conscious state of the mind. These revealed truths formed the bed-rock on which the race built up a social structure with a spiritual view of life known as the Varnasramachara. Endowed with a deeper spiritual insight and superior moral strength this particular ethnic group called itself "Arya" as distinguished from other culturally inferior groups termed "Anarya". The Aryans organised a society of their own for the practice, preservation and diffusion of spirituality in the collective life of the people. They betook themselves to Aryanise the whole of India by inculcating the Varnasramachara among the Anarya races of India.[16]

Swami Vivekananda observed that Indian society has two distinct characteristics. First, whereas other nations of the world give the highest honour to the Kshatriya or military class, Indian society pays its homage to the Brahmin or spiritually cultured class. Secondly, in other lands the unit of social development is the individual, but in India the unit of development is the community. The history of the ancient and modern nations of the world bears testimony to his first observation. And the second is verified by modern historical researches based on the study of Smriti Shastras and the old inscriptions relating to the various castes. In recent years some scholars have thrown much light on the social institutions of ancient India and conclusively shown the free, independent and all-sided growth of the caste as a whole.[17] It is wrong to say that the free growth and development of the individual was paralysed by the Indian social system. Our society set up a noble ideal before each individual—the uplift of the whole community to which one belongs, along with the elevation of one's own self. The Swami said, "Here too, one has every chance of rising from a low caste to a higher or the highest; only in this

birth-land of altruism, one is compelled to take his whole caste along with him."

Our Social Foundations

Of the several ethnic groups with different languages and socio-cultural standards, one group evolved a new society with a distinct culture of its own. This ethnic group, of which we have already said, successfully solved the social, racial and linguistic problems of the age. A racial solution was found in the word 'Arya' which meant the spiritually cultured. In fact 'Arya' was a race ideal, as explained in the Smritis; and the diverse races gradually realising this ideal in their life and conduct, called themselves 'Arya.' It was after a sustained struggle, both spiritual and cultural, extending over centuries that the 'Arya' ideal was finally upheld and the inferior groups veered round it.[18] The history of India clearly indicates how the Sakas, the Huns and other Central Asian tribes after having been culturally conquered, were admitted into the Aryan fold, how they then espoused the cause of the Aryan religion and declared themselves as the descendants of the solar and lunar dynasties of the Indian Epics. The process of Aryanising also the Dravidians and other peoples of Northern and Southern India begin from the prehistoric period.

In the same manner, out of different languages, the new society established a linguistic standard in 'Sanskrit.' The most sublime truths, revealed to the seers, were proclaimed through the medium of Sanskrit, which was called the Deva-bhasha or the language of the gods. The Sanskrit received the stamp of prestige and dignity all its own. A strenuous struggle between different languages went on for centuries, till at last Sanskrit got the upper hand owing to the cultural conversion of the non-Aryan races. It is probable that some languages having been greatly influenced by Sanskrit, ultimately merged into it; whereas some others which were not absorbed by Sanskrit, however, recognised its supremacy. And the few non-Aryan languages which had been long despised by the sacerdotal aristocracy of the new society, asserted themselves in process of time. Pali which belonged to the last group finally acquired a pre-eminent position having been the vehicle of Buddhistic thought and culture.

In regard to the social ideals, there was a good deal of

confusion of thought and conflict of opinions as to their respective merits. Lest the society and the state should turn out to be merely institutions for the material enjoyments, the builders of the new society set up the ideal of Brahminhood as the supreme social goal. This Brahmanhood is synonymous with the state of spiritual illumination and ecstatic bliss to be sought after by every individual. For its achievement a severe spiritual discipline was introduced in the life of every individual Although the ideal was time and again lowered at the hands of the priests, great spiritual personalities rose now and then and re-established the noble ideal of Brahminhood in society. In the introduction to his commentary on the Gita, Acharya Sankar has said :—

> "The Vedic religion is preserved so long as this ideal of Brahminhood is well protected; for the whole Vedic scheme of life, the Varnasramacharya, is intimately bound up with it." Swami Vivekananda meant practically the same thing when he said : "Just as Sanskrit has been the linguistic solution, so the 'Arya' the racial solution. So Brahminhood is the solution of varying degrees of progress and culture as well as that of social and political problems."

The Varnasramachara, with Brahminhood as its avowed goal, allotted duties and responsibilities to the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas and the Sudras, according to their temperaments and capacities. Each class with its respective obligations of life was great in its own place inasmuch as the proper discharge of its duties would lead to spiritual illumination and bliss. The Gita says : "If a man worships God by performing the duties prescribed for him, he attains perfection." This one ideal of the attainment of perfection loomed large before the eyes of all communities; and the members thereof used to struggle more for self-purification through their respective caste-duties than for social rights and privileges.

The Western idea of the assertion of rights has possessed us in modern times. We seldom care to think of our Aryan scheme of life and the feasibility of restoring it at the present day. The current social reform movements in India hardly take this into count. They are adopting ways and means which are creating

ill-will and hatred between classes and sects, and consequently frittering all social energies away. Our social system is founded upon the Fundamental teaching that no work is mean, that each individual is great in his own place, that the duties of a king and those of a sweeper have equal dignity and sanctity. The Vedic knowledge is the common treasure of all, and all communities can attain the ideal of the Vedas by strictly following their respective avocations of life Aristocracy of knowledge and culture is the greatest hindrance to our collective growth. And if we can democratise knowledge and culture today, there will remain no scope for deprecating one calling as mean and detestable and for extolling another avocation as covetable and dignified. Thus there will be castes without the privileges which create so much rancour and strife among the different classes.

The Spiritual and the Mundane

A new chapter of the history of India opened with the spread of Buddhism. In the obscure period proceeding the Buddhistic age, the Vedic programme of life could not be carried out smoothly owing to various causes. With the total destruction of the Kshatriya power in the Bharata war, society lost its protective power and fell an easy prey to the non-Aryan hordes who ravaged and plundered the country. To add to this, the priestly classes got the upper hand in society and began to spread superstitious dogmas and intricate ceremonials in order to make themselves rich and powerful. For a time it seemed as if the Vedic society was shaken to its very foundation. At this time Buddhism appeared in the soil of India and rescued her from the hands of the priests and the non-Aryan hordes. It presented the teachings of the Upanishads in a new form and succeeded, by reason of its liberal principles, in raising the low and depressed, and absorbing many non-Vedic races in the Aryan society. It ventured to rise as a re-actionary, non-conformist faith against the priestly superstitions. And by its gospel of social equality it granted to the oppressed masses of India a new lease of life and offered them a very simple, ethical religion [19] But Buddhism denied the ideals of (individual duty) and (caste-duty), so much extolled in the Vedic scheme of society, which were the most powerful factors in evolving all the potentialities of the people along their individual lines.

The message of Nirvana, the doctrine of Ahimsa and the

philosophy of Love, preached so unreservedly to all, irrespective of caste or creed, were too high for the common people, and consequently hampered the harmonious development of society. Buddhism did not seek to strengthen the Vedic social foundations, and even the abstruse philosophical idealism of Nalanda and Vikramsila could not raise the Kshatriya power by infusing strength and vigour into society.

The following suggestive remarks of the Swami reveal the defects of Buddhism. "The Vedas were the first to find and proclaim the way of Moksha and from that one source, the Vedas, was taken whatever any great teacher, say, Buddha or Christ, afterwards taught. Now they were Sannyasins, and therefore they had no enemy and were friendly and compassionate towards all, that was well and good for them But why this attempt to compel the whole world to follow the same path of Moksha ? Can beauty be manufactured by rubbing and scrubbing ? Can any one be made one's own by entreaties or by force ? What does Buddha or Christ prescribe for the man who neither wants Moksha nor is fit to receive it ? Nothing ! Either you must have Moksha, or you are doomed to destruction,—these are the only two ways held by both of them and there is no middle course. You are tied hand and foot in the matter of trying for anything other than Moksha. There is no way shown how you may enjoy a little for a time, not only all openings to that are hermetically sealed to you, but in addition, there are obstructions put at every step It is only the Vedic religion which considers ways and means and lays down rules for the four-fold attainment of man, comprising Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Buddha ruined us and so did Christ ruin Greece and Rome ! Then in due course of time, fortunately the Europeans became Protestants shook off the teachings of Christ as represented by Papal authority, and heaved a sigh of relief. In India Kumarilla again brought into currency the Karma Marga, the way of Karma only, and Shankara and Ramanuja firmly re-established the eternal Vedic religion, harmonising and balancing in due proportion Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Thus the nation was brought to the way of regaining its lost life, but India has three hundred million souls to wake and hence the delay. To revive three hundred millions, can it be done in a day ?

The aims of the Buddhistic and the Vedic religions are the

same, but the means adopted by the Buddhistic are not right. If the Buddhistic means were correct, then why have we been thus hopelessly lost and ruined ? It will not do to say that the efflux of time has naturally wrought this Can time work transgressing the laws of cause and effect ? Therefore, though the aims are the same, the Buddhists for want of right means have degraded India."

Swadharma and Jatidharma

The main contribution of Western nationalism to Indian thought is a highly developed civic consciousness. Yet, this is not altogether new to the social system of India. In the Gita Sri Krishna taught Arjuna the Indian ideal of civic duties and responsibilities Sri Krishna revealed the philosophy of life to Arjuna who realised his obligation in society. This Indian civic ideal based on Swadharma or one's own duty was realised to a great degree by Rajput heroes and heroines. Drawing its inspiration from religion as its back-ground, it became a power in building up a nation in Maharashtra. The scattered spiritual forces had been gathered by the untiring zeal and energy of the great Mahratta saints for about two centuries before the ascendancy of Shivaji And thus the ground was prepared, and seeds of all-sided national development sown in a silent, unperceived manner. With Shivaji and Ramadas, the gathered forces became dynamic and thus succeeded in creating a nation.[20]

While the civic consciousness in the West is based on the assertion of rights, in India it is based upon the fulfilment of one's duties according to the Shastras. The philosophy of rights in Western nationalism has in view nothing short of individual or national self-aggrandisement. In India the philosophy of duty sets up a spiritual ideal before every individual and strives for spiritualising his life's endeavours.

The internal aud external revolutions have turned everything topsy-turvy; and the time-honoured principles of the social system of India have been utterly lost sight of. With the decline of the proper Jatidharma and Swadharma, India became degenerated. Swami Vivekananda discovered the cause of the socio-political degradation of India in our ignoring the injunctions of the Shastras. Discussing our dismal failure in socio-political life, he said as follows :

"The right and correct means is that of the Vedas,—the Jatidharma, that is the Dharma enjoined according to different castes, and the Swadharma, that is one's own dharma or set of duties prescribed for man according to his capacity and position, which is the very basis of Vedic religion and Vedic society.

"Now, this Jatidharma, this Swadharma, is the path of welfare of all society in every land, the ladder to ultimate freedom. With the decay of this Jatidharma, this Swadharma, has come the downfall of our land. But the Jatidharma or Swadharma as commonly understood at present by the higher castes is rather a new evil which has to be guarded against. They think they know everything of Jatidharma, but really they know nothing of it. Regarding their own village customs as the eternal customs laid down by the Vedas, and appropriating to themselves all privileges, they are going to the doom! I am not talking of caste as determined by qualitative distinction but of the hereditary caste system. I admit that the qualitative caste system is primarily one, but the qualities become hereditary in two or three generations. That vital point of our national life has been touched; otherwise why should we sink to this degraded state? How came this terrible Varnashankara—this confounding mixture of all castes and disappearance of all qualitative distinctions? Why has the white complexion of our forefathers become black? Why did the Sattvaguna give place to the prevailing Tamas with a sprinkling, as it were, of Rajas in it? That is a long story to tell."

The admixture of various races and the conflict of various cultures have brought about a chaotic condition in India. Out of this chaos a new nation has to be evolved strictly on the basis of Aryan ideals and scheme of life. The Jatidharma and Swadharma, partially realised by a group here and a group there, must today receive a universal recognition in the country. By means of these, the people will be able to develop the true civic consciousness, assimilating the best socio-political elements of occidental culture and preserving at the same time the spiritual ideal of the race intact. For harmonious development of India as a nation, the restatement of the scriptures is the most urgent

desideratum. Swami Vivekananda so presented our ancient social ideals as to suit modern conditions, and discovered the remedy for our social evils in the re-establishment of the true Jatidharma and Swadharma in the national life of India.

"For the present try to understand this, that if the Jatidharma be rightly and truely preserved, the nation shall never fall. If this is true, then what was it that brought our downfall ? That we have fallen is the sure sign that the present basis of Jatidharma is quite contrary to what it really is. First, read your own Shastras through and through, and you will easily see that what the Shastras define as caste-dharma has disappeared almost everywhere from the land. Now try to bring back the true Jatidharma and then it will be a real and sure boon to the country."

The Bane of Untouchability

"The country from end to end" said the Swami, "is being bored to extinction by the cries, 'don't touch' of the non-touchism party." Truly, the greatest bane of priestcraft in India is this untouchability which has cramped the growth of the masses for centuries. The problem is as old as the Vedic age but it was solved in different periods of our history The same problem has now assumed the most acute form in modern India as we have lost sight of the Vedic scheme of life. Various religious movements were started in ancient and medieval India to spread culture among the masses and to give them their rightful place in society. The great reformers like Buddha, Ramanuja, Ramananda, Nanak, Chaitanya, Kabir, and others rose against priestly tyranny and dogmatic religion. They interpreted the true spirit of Hinduism and disseminated the truths of religion to the masses at large.

How often Swami Vivekananda used to say that no other religion has preached the dignity of man and the unity of souls in such a lofty strain as Hinduism, and yet no other religion has so mercilessly trodden upon the necks of the poor and the oppressed ! With a heart bleeding for the poor masses he said, "I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail, until the masses in India are once more well-educated, well-fed and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in return they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India we must

work for them."

It is a happy augury that at the present day this idea of the great Swami is working in many minds throughout the land, and there are some who are trying to serve the masses and remove the vice of untouchability The fancied gulf of difference between the classes and the masses is slowly and silently going to be bridged. The movement for the uplift of the masses inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi has brought a new hope and solace to the down-trodden of India.

The cult of Nara-Narayana Seva that Swami Vivekananda preached has a great national significance. His dream was to spiritualise the entire life of the nation. In addition to the worship of God in temples and images the Swami wanted us to worship God in man And this form of worship is, according to him, an easier path for the realisation of oneness of God and man In this worship of Shiva in Jiva the Swami discovered the real panacea for untouchability and other evils of society. He wanted the Vedantic conception of the oneness of all souls to be practically realised by the entire nation : he called forth the divine in man. By practising Narayana worship the worshipper and the worshipped, both are benefited. The untouchables trodden under foot for many centuries will have faith and strength in themselves by being treated with respect as symbols of God. On the other hand, the worshippers trying to elevate the conditions of the masses will live a spiritual life and will not be led astray by any foreign idealism leading to class war and social discord. We ought to serve in the light of Indian ideal, and combine work and worship in our life.

The Brahmin and the Non-Brahmin

The problem of the Brahmin and the Non-Brahmin also pertains to the above problem. In many parts of India the non-Brahmins have been oppressed for many centuries and thus compelled to embrace faiths other than their own. The so-called Brahmins have been too selfish and narrow-minded in their dealings with other sects. They have stood in the way of the spiritual and social emancipation of the non-Brahmins. Inspired of late by the Western theory of rights the non-Brahmins on the other hand have rebelled against the existing order of things. Unfortunately, they are trying to assert themselves in the wrong

way. This inter-caste dissension is detrimental to the real progress of the country. There are also undesirable courses open to the oppressed non-Brahmins : they may either embrace any other creed that can improve their condition, or evolve a special religion of their own, forsaking the religion of the Vedas. In either case, the true purpose of the history of India will be frustrated and the real national growth will be obstructed for ever. It must however be said to the credit of the oppressed non-Brahmins that they still desire to remain within the fold of Hinduism and so it is the duty of the Brahmins to remove all obstacles from the path of the depressed classes.

It is high time for the Brahmins as well as for the non-Brahmins to take upon themselves the responsibility of protecting and preserving the spiritual culture of India. Said the Swami, "Not a step forward can be made by these inter-caste quarrels, not one difficulty removed, only the beneficial onward march of events would be thrown back possibly for centuries, if the fire bursts out into flames. It would be a repetition of the Buddhistic political blunder."

Is Caste Rigid ?

Brahminhood or the enlightened state of perfection or illumination is the ideal of the Indian scheme of life. This enables the lowest of the low to raise themselves, slowly but steadily, to that noble ideal by the assimilation of culture and learning. The social evils that are eating into our vitals today have no connection whatsoever with this scheme of life. They have cropped up on account of our ignorance, superstitions and conventions. The true spirit of the Eternal Religion has been consigned to blank oblivion by us for many centuries.

Neither religion nor the religious scheme of life is responsible for the evils of priestcraft and the quixotism of the caste system. Many reformers drawing inspiration from Western life and thought, committed a great blunder when they ascribed our social evils to the religion of India and her social ideals. The Swami devoted his whole energy to the vindication of the Eternal Religion and its scheme of life. Observed he, "All the reformers in India made the serious mistake of making religion accountable for all the horrors of priest-craft and degeneration and went forthwith to pull down the indestructible structure, and what was the result ?

Failure !"

It is only a half-truth to say that all knowledge was exclusively meant for the three upper castes in ancient India, that women, the Sudras and the untouchables were entirely excluded from Vedic knowledge. The compilation of the Puranas indicates a determined and systematic effort for the enlightenment of those who were unable to understand the Vedas May be, the priests many a time tortured the texts and misinterpreted the Shastras. But do we not find the towering personalities appearing age after age, bent on resuscitating the Vedic ideals and the Vedic scheme of life ? In the Vedic age there was no monopoly of knowledge. In succeeding epochs it might have been necessary for the nation to solve the complex racial problems. In the 26th Chapter of the Yajurveda it is distinctly said that Vedic knowledge is to be preached even unto the untouchables. The passage runs as follows :

> "This blissful Vedic knowledge is to be brought to all, the Brahmanas, the Kshatriyas, the Sudras, the Vaisyas, the maid-servants and the untouchables."

Swami Vivekananda reiterated the message of the great ancient sages when he said, "Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the Brahmins. Initiate all even down to the Chandalas in these fiery Mantrams. Also instruct them in simple words about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture, etc If you cannot do this, then fie upon your education and culture, and fie upon your studying the way of the Vedas and the Vedanta."

"Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way" said the Swami. For centuries they have been forced to be dependents on others and to live in utter helplessness. They have not been allowed equal privileges in religious rites and sacraments The result is that they are now unable to protect themselves from any danger and dishonour, or enlighten themselves by the culture and knowledge common to all. The fact is that society has degenerated as a whole, and the ideal set up by the scriptures such as Manu-Samhita, Srauta Sutras, etc. is no longer remembered. In the Vedas, the Puranas, and the

Sanskrit dramas we find mention of an equality of cultural rights among men and women, boys and girls. The Srauta Sutra says, "Vedic verses are to be recited by the wife." We find in the Vedas the marvellous lives of many women who either discovered the truths of the Vedas or expounded them. The Swami wished that at the present day also there should be many cultured women studying the Vedas and living the perfect ideal of renunciation like men. "Studying the present needs of the age," said the Swami, "it seems imperative to train some of them up in the ideals of renunciation, so that they will take up the vow of life-long virginity, fired with the strength of that virtue of chastity which is innate in their life-blood from hoary antiquity."

The rigidity of caste as prevailing now was unknown in ancient India. The caste system was initiated for the elevation of the social groups to Brahminhood, with community as the unit as opposed to the individual. By means of culture and learning the community in the lowest grade could raise itself higher and higher by degrees till it got itself admitted into the community of Brahmins. This process of advancement of each community is corroborated both by our history and by our Scriptures. Manu distinctly says, "Sudras by culture attain Brahminhood." The Apasthambha Sutra mentions the elasticity of the caste system.

> "In the evolution of castes the lower Varnas by practising Dharma are promoted to the higher Varnas, while the higher Varnas following Adharma are degraded into the viler ones."

The Social Plan

The social history of India clearly shows that the castes were never static Time and again, the lower communities came within the pale of the Brahmin community. This novel feature of our social history can be traced in all parts of India. The happy merging of a lower caste into a superior one is verified by both our history and our sacred literature. The Swami said, 'There are thousands of castes and some are even getting admission into Brahminhood, for what prevents any caste from declaring that they are Brahmins ? Thus caste with all its rigour has been created in that manner."

Thus our spiritual scheme of life does not countenance

untouchability and other evil customs and manners that have crept into society. It has been explained that by setting up the ideals of our own and not by following the destructive ideas of an exotic culture, we shall achieve our social emancipation. The Swami wanted the resuscitation of the entire culture of India in all its aspects by means of a root-and-branch reform throughout the country; he did not believe in any patch-work. "The solution of the social problems" said he, "is not by bringing down the higher but raising the lower up to the level of the higher * * *

> "What is the plan ? The ideal at one end is the Brahmin and the ideal at the other end is the Chandala and the whole work is to raise the Chandala up to the Brahmin."

Bearing in mind the above ideal, our object therefore should be, not the destruction of the real caste, but the equalisation of privileges. Our first and foremost duty at the present day is to see that everyone down to the Chandala is helped to attain Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (Virtue, Wealth, Desire and Liberation). Our social energies should not be wasted in breaking castes but rather applied to remove the privileges enjoyed by the upper classes If we can develop our castes properly, there is no National loss in having even thousands of them more. For, considering the economic aspect of castes we see that greater the number of castes in the country, the richer and more prosperous will it be in arts, crafts and industries.[21]

The Marital Relation

One great evil of the rigour of the castes and sub-castes is that it has debilitated the national physique by the fixing of matrimonial relation within a limited circle extremely small. It has come to such a pass that marital alliance even between the nearest relations takes place and consequently children inherit to a great degree the constitutional diseases of their parents. On this problem the Swami remarked :

> "The time is yet very long in coming when marriages of that kind (a Bengalee marrying a Madrasee or Mahratti) will be

widely possible. Besides, it is not judicious now to go in for that, all of a sudden. One of the secrets of work is to go by the way of the least possible resistance. So first of all let there be marriages within the sphere of one's own caste people. Take for instance the Kayasthas of Bengal. They have several sub-divisions among them such as, the Uttarrarhi, Dakshinrarhi, Bangaj etc., and they do not intermarry with each other. Now let there be inter-marriages between the Uttarrarhi and the Dakshinrarhi and if that is not possible at present, let it be between the Bangajas and the Dakshinrarhi. Thus we are to build up that which is already existing and which is in our hands to reduce into practical reform. Reform does not even mean wholesale breaking down."

Food

Much importance has been attached in our society to food, the doctrine of Ahimsa and non-meat-eating. But the old laws of the Rishis are not heeded at all. Local customs and meaningless ideas are reigning supreme in every part of the country. There is certainly a clear and definite relation between food and mind. In our scriptures, vegetarianism is prescribed for the people of Sattvic temperament. In ancient India, meat-eating was never prohibited for the common people who had to work hard for their livelihood. Animal sacrifice was a feature of the Vedic rites and people of the four castes unhesitatingly took the sacramental meat.[22] This is clearly substantiated by the Vedas, the Vedic Sutras, the Epics and the Puranas. But the Buddhistic tenet of non-killing and the Vaishnava cult of love having exceeded the limits set up by the Vedic religion brought about the deterioration of the physique of the common people. The Swami insisted more upon the spirit of religion than upon the forms and wanted to popularise meat-eating widely among the common people, leaving vegetarian food specially for the Sattvic, the highly spiritual. About the problem of food he remarked : "There are according to the scriptures three things which make food impure, (1) Jatidosha or natural defects of a certain class of food like onions, garlic, etc., (2) Nimittadosha or defects arising from the presence of external impurities in it such as the dead insects or the dust etc. that attach to sweetmeats bought from the shops, (3) Ashrayadosha or defects that arise by the food coming from evil sources as when it has been touched

and handled by wicked persons. Special care should be taken to avoid the first and second classes of defects. But in this country, men pay no regard to those very two and go on fighting for the third alone, the very one that none but a Yogi can really discriminate. There is no discrimination of good and bad men, for their food may be taken from the hands of anyone who wears a thread." He added "All liking for fish and meat disappears when pure *Sattva* is highly developed, and these are the signs of its manifestation in a soul :—Sacrifice of everything for others, perfect non-attachment to lust and wealth, want of pride and egoism. The desire for animal food goes when these things are seen in a man. And where such indications are absent, and yet you find men siding with the non-killing party, know it for a certainty that here there is either hypocrisy or a show of religion. When you yourself come to that stage of pure Sattva, give up fish and meat, by all means."

Some Timely Suggestions

Besides dwelling at length upon the basic principles of Indian social structure, we have seen in the foregoing pages how Swami Vivekananda studied our society and what practical methods of reform he suggested for our all-round development. In conclusion, let us recapitulate some of the important points on which the Swami laid much emphasis :

(a) The social scheme of life evolved in India has a characteristic feature of its own. The Indian view of social life is quite different from the Western. Without knowing the characteristic feature of the plan of the Rishis, no social problem in India can be properly solved. We shall be only frittering away our energies if we adopt the sociological principles of the West. So the very first step in social reconstruction lies in the realisation of the basic principles of our society.

(b) The ideal of Mukti or liberation has been set up before the Indian society, to be sought and realised by all its members. The Indian society has been designed for providing scope for the collective pursuit of spirituality.

(c) Before launching upon any social reform we must realise

the need for the practice, preservation and spread of spirituality. As the very first step in social reform, all possible means should be immediately taken up for creating a public opinion that spirituality is the basic foundation of our society. If the people who are ignorant of their spiritual strength be made familiar with these ideals, then they shall have a stronger foundation upon which to re-build a social structure adapted to modern conditions.

(d) It is not due to any fault of our scriptures that our society has become weak and prostrated. It is due to the misunderstanding of our scriptures that we have been suffering for ages The time has now come to popularise our Smriti Shastras, particularly the Shanti Parva of the Mahabharata and the Manu Samhita It is essential for us to study them from an Indian point of view. A new epoch is certainly destined to dawn upon us with the revival of the Smriti Shastras.

(e) The noblest ideal inculcated by the Smriti Shastras is the ideal of Swadharma or duty as opposed to the doctrine of right promulgated by the political and social sciences of the Western nations. Indians will achieve their end by realising their Swadharma as stated in Shastras. This will make them great in their respective stations of life and bridge the yawning gulf between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins.

(f) The caste system is not essentially detrimental to the growth of our society. It is a marvellous institution which inspires its members to manage their affairs of life in all spheres, without any interference from outside. The principles underlying the system are very much allied to what the advanced socialists and communists are striving today to realise in Europe by the process of decentralisation of the functions of the Government.

(g) We have in our society the Chandala at one end and the Brahmin at the other The object of the caste system is to uplift the Chandala stage by stage to Brahminhood,—to perfect purity and spirituality.

(h) It is the duty of each caste to ennoble itself by the appropriation of culture and education, and to finally

reach the supreme ideal of Brahminhood, open to all castes for attainment. Spiritual culture must be the common property of all.

(i) ... We have to redivide the whole Hindu population grouping it under the four main castes of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras as of old. The numberless modern sub-divisions of the Brahmins that have split them up into so many castes, as it were, have to be abolished and a single Brahmin caste has to be made by uniting them all. Each of the three remaining castes will have to be brought similarly into single groups, as was the case in Vedic times."

(j) Untouchability has taken a deep root in society through selfishness, superstitions and evil customs, local and provincial. It can be removed by preaching the ancient philosophy or life to the people. The Swami has reasserted this philosophy of life in the cult of Narayana worship—the cult of viewing all men as the veritable manifestations of the Godhead and treating them as such.

(k) A liberal culture is to be spread among the women of India so that they may be placed in a position to tackle their own problems The teachings of the scriptures would stimulate in them a regard for culture, self-denial and other higher ideals as are found in the lives of Gargi, Sita, Samghamitra and others. It is well to remember that "any attempt to modernise our women, if it tries to take our women apart from that ideal of Sita, is immediately a failure."

The Swami had a mighty and noble dream which is yet to materialise. The task to which we have to immediately set ourselves is given in his own words :

"To effect this we have to create a highly powerful social organisation whose life-force will slowly enter into the very bone and marrow of India and bring her from her moribund condition back to life."
"Through fear of public censure, of starvation and of loss of reputation men do not dare to engage in new enterprises even

though they may be beneficial to society. Then again, the longer a society has pursued a particular course, the harder it is for it to strike out a new path. Therefore to lay the foundation of this highly powerful society, the only means is the founding of new colonies where people, away from the grip of society which is harder to break through than even the impressions of one's past lives, will put forth new enthusiasm and new enterprise and be strong with new strength. There is no chance of finding colonies outside India."

POLITICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Since the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885 the Indian public have been taking active measures in an organised manner for the political development of the country. The institution was a direct outcome of English education in India and all its founders drew inspiration mainly from the political thoughts and conceptions of the West. The Congress has been diffusing Western civic and political ideas in India and persuading the country to put forth its endeavours for attaining the political status enjoyed by the other nations of the world. As regards the methods of attaining it, the Congress has modified them from time to time. But so far as the political reconstruction of the country concerned, it has not swerved an inch from the principles and policies found in the West. With the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, Indian politics has been partially spiritualised, so to speak; for, the Non-co-operation Movement was mainly based upon certain cardinal moral virtues, not ordinarily found operating in political movements. With the apparent failure of the movement two schools of political thought have developed in the country. The adherents of one school have taken vigorous steps along various lines to capture the centralised power of the State by entering into the various Legislative bodies. The followers of the other school have absolutely no faith in the institutions of the State and their chosen goal is to train up the masses politically without the help of these Legislative bodies. They believe that the Legislatures, as constituted at present, will only result in frittering away our energies without producing any permanent good to the people. Moreover,

they say that a self-respecting people cannot associate with a system of Government, bent on humiliating India before the world. But whatever may be the distinction of the two schools of thought outwardly, they essentially subscribe to the political ideals as they obtain in Europe and America.

Western politics is foreign to the genius of the people of India, having a distinct culture and civilisation of their own.[23] The real politics that will benefit the Indian people can be evolved only by the people themselves, and not by the super-imposition of political theories of other nations, having a different historical evolution of their own. The basic principles of the socio-political organisations differ in different countries So, for the development of a truly Indian type of politics, we must go to the very fountain-head of all our national aspirations—the Shastras. And once this source of inspiration is reached, we shall be astonished to find how the political life of the Indian people will be so energised as to advance with rapid strides. In his memorable Calcutta address, Swami Vivekananda tried to impress upon the minds of our countrymen the secret of work in India in the following lines :

> "Each nation has its own peculiar method of work. Some work through politics, some through social reforms, some through other lines. With us religion is the only ground along which we can move The Englishmen can understand religion even through politics Perhaps, the American can understand religion even through social reforms. But the Indian can understand even politics when it is given through religion; sociology must come through religion, everything must come through religion. For that is the theme; the rest are the variations in the national life-music."

The Struggling System

Two distinct streams of civilisations have risen in the world, one on the basis of politics and the other on the basis of religion. In ancient Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Rome and Modern Europe, the principal note in the music of collective life was politics, with which all other notes, religious of otherwise, combined to form a harmony. Political nationalism accepts religion and ethics so far as they conduce to the material welfare of the

people. In religious nationalism we find that neither politics nor sociology has been allowed to become the supreme governing principle of life. The collective pursuit of spirituality in an organised nation has been the ideal of Indian civilisation and culture. India has accepted politics and sociology so far as they can lead us towards the spiritual goal. Solely with a view to practise, preserve and preach spirituality, India evolved politics and sociology of her own based upon spiritual ideals. The Swami wanted the revival of that Indian type of politics which can reappear in and through religion and religion alone. India has forgotten how religion can build up its own politics, and has taken steps to organise the thoughts and activities of the people purely along a political line as in the West. The Swami was against this political nationalism of the West and said in one of his lectures, "If you succeed in the attempt to throw off religion and take up either politics or society or any other thing as your centre, as the vitality of your national life, the result will be that you will be extinct "

A sound political philosophy should be placed before the country before launching into any political movement All political "isms" of the West are penetrating into India, and those who are enamoured of Western modes of life are taking to Western methods without realising the basis of their life of the specific ideal of their own. The whole of Europe is now passing through a period of political transition, and its systems that we are seeking to follow have been found wanting in many respects. That we may understand the proper significance of Vivekananda, we quote here some noteworthy lines of P. Kropotkin, explaining the inevitable vices of the political nationalism of the West. "All the nations evolved on the same lines; and wars, perpetual wars, break up for the right of precedents in the market. Wars for the possession of the East, wars for the Empire of the Sea, wars to impose duties on imports and to dictate conditions to neighbouring states, wars against those 'blacks' who revolt ! The roar of the canon never ceases in the world, whole races are massacred, the states of Europe spend a third of their budgets in armaments and we know how heavily these taxes fall on the workers.

"Education still remains the privilege of a small minority, for it is idle to talk of education, when the workman's child is

forced at the age ot 13 to go down into mine or to help his father in the farm. It is idle to talk of studying to the worker who comes home in the evening wearied by excessive toil and its brutalising atmosphere. Society is to be found to remain divided into two hostile camps and in such conditions freedom is a vain word. The radical begins by demanding a greater extension of political rights, but soon sees that the breath of liberty leads to the uplifting of the proletariat, and then he turns round, changes his opinion and reverts to repressive legislation and government by the sword.

"A vast array of courts, judges, policemen, gaolers is needed to uphold these privileges; and this array gives rise in its turn to a whole system of espionage of witness, of spies, of threats and corruption."

Seeing all these things Swami Vivekananda ventured to say: "The political systems that we are struggling for in India have been in Europe for ages, have been tried for centuries and found wanting. One after another the institutions, systems, and everything connected with political governments have been condemned as useless and Europe is restless, does not know where to turn .. It is hopeless and perfectly useless to govern mankind with the sword. You will find that the very centres from which such ideas as government by force sprang up are the very first centres to degrade and degenerate and crumble to pieces. Europe, the centre of the manifestation of material energy will crumble into dust within fifty years, if she is not mindful to change her position, to shift her ground and make spirituality the basis of her life."

Politics, Indian and Western

The ideal of the Indian type of politics and that of the Western type are poles apart. In the West politics is the supreme organising factor, taking the initiative in every affair for the material advancement of the nation. It is state-centred in the sense that the state is the sole authority to handle and utilise it for specific purposes. *Apart from the State, the masses of Europe possess no politics of their own ?*[24] And as in most countries the State is represented by the middle-class aristocracy, the people

have to suffer a great deal The only way open to the masses for preserving their rights is to struggle to obtain power by capturing the State. The political history of Europe is thus a record of a prolonged tug-of-war between the State and the people. But such is the irony of fate that the particular group having power in hands, creates another new aristocracy and places all sorts of obstacles in the way of the free initiative of the people. Thus, state-centred politics has been a death-blow to the genuine local self-governing institutions in Western lands.

The function of the Indian type of State is not to dictate anything to the people but to watch and help the advancement of the scheme of life which they have evolved on the basis of their religion The people had a free, independent local politics of their own, separate and distinct from that of the State. It formed a part and parcel of the social scheme of life. Even during the Mahomedan period, when the foreign power began to encroach upon and interfere with the 'local politics,' the people could still preserve the remnants of those local self-governing institutions for many centuries.

While Western politics has evolved on the basis of 'the rights of the people,' Indian politics has evolved upon the basis of the 'duties of the people.' In the West, material wealth and prosperity being the goal of life, both the State and the people have been trying to enjoy as much of rights as they can. In India self-purification based on Dharma being the avowed object, both the State and the people had learned to observe political activities as "duties." Thus, the politics of the State is Raja-dharma, and the politics of the people is Prajadharma. Both Rajadharma and Prajadharma have been founded on a strong spiritual discipline so that the waves of materialism may not destroy the high spiritual ideals, sought after both by the State and the people through their respective avocations in the collective life. The dichotomy of Rajadharma and Prajadharma in the same spiritual scheme of life is a marvellous feature of the Indian political scheme,—a feature unknown to the politics of other nations, mad after material power and greed.

The State and the People

The function of the State in Indian politics is explained in the following verses :

"The King (central government) has been created as the protector of the Varnas and the Ashramas performing their respective Dharma with the greatest regard." (Manu 9-35)

Similar instances can be cited from the Shanti Parva in the Mahabbharata. Thus the duty of the internal and the external protection of the people's scheme of life was entrusted to the State.

Of the two functions of the State, the Legislative and the Executive, the first was vested in the sages, who led a peaceful life of meditation and had no personal gain to derive from society. Thus, no selfish motive could corrupt their Legislation and no wire-pulling was possible. As spiritual advancement was the goal of the people, only the spiritual men could be the right persons to make laws for national advancement. The duties and obligations of the people were thus formulated by unselfish spiritual men, and the State for fulfilling its executive functions could make bye-laws strictly in accordance with the laws framed by the sages. Manu clearly says as follows :

"A law-giver should patiently observe the civic duties of a Jati, a Janapada, a Sreni and a Kula before formulating Swadharma " In this verse we find how the independent growth of each community and family was encouraged by the laws in ancient India."

In regard to the proprietary rights of the land we see that the people enjoyed the fullest freedom. The land was exclusively the property of the people The State took a reasonable portion of the produce for the maintenance of peace and order, both external and internal. Thus Katyayana says :

"The Prajas, the inhabitants of the land, are the real proprietors. The king being the protector is only indirectly the master of the land and takes one-sixth of the total produce."

In his commentary on verse 99, Chapter 8 of the Manusamhita, Medhatithi says :

"The people are the enjoyers and proprietors of the land, the king is only the protector."

From the Smriti Shastras we know how the people of ancient India evolved a scheme of political life without any state initiative and how it was based on the spiritual heritage of the race. When Swami Vivekananda urged that religion must build the nation in India, he clearly and distinctly meant the reorganisation of the political life of India upon the principles of the Smriti Shastras. In his Bengali pamphlet. 'The East and the West,' the Swami has suggested how the *Dharma-buddhi* of the people inculcated in the Smritis must be brought to bear on the solution of our socio-political problems.

The Courses Open to Us

Two well-defined courses of political reconstruction are open to us. One aims at capturing the powers of the State by constitutional or unconstitutional means so that the central government can exert its influence upon the people and organise them from villages upward by taking all necessary legislative and executive measures. The situation, as it obtains today in India, does not give us much hope along this line, inasmuch as the leaders of this school are not generally cognisant of the basic foundations of Indian national life; and so there is every chance of making India a replica of America or Russia, thus frustrating the purposes of India in the world scheme. Moreover, a violent programme for the political uplift of India will have to face the greatest resistance and we fear that the pioneers of the movement will not be able to stand the concomitant shocks, internal and external. The other course open to us is to aim at developing the political life of the people free of any State initiative. In this course also there can be two lines of action. One is to raise the masses on communistic principles as in Russia for establishing a system of Government akin to the Soviet System, and the other is to slowly but steadily build the political life of the people along the line of least resistance, on the basis of the *samskaras* of the people. This last is the only possible way of political reconstruction in India that can be in keeping with the genius of the people and which if patiently and steadfastly followed can assimilate the

best elements of Western political life without marring the cultural mission of India. On the other hand, if India launches upon any socialistic or communistic movement, the age-long course of the historical evolution of India will be ignored and a complex situation will be created in the country, unnecessarily dissipating our national energies. Swami Vivekananda dwelling on this socialstic movement said, "Everything goes to show, the socialism or some form of rule by the people, call it what you will, is coming on the boards. The people will certainly want the satisfaction of their material needs, less work, no oppression no war, more food. But what guarantee have we that this or any other civilisation will last unless it is based on religion, on the goodness of men ? Depend on it, religion goes to the root of the matter. If it is all right, all is right." Criticising the adherents of the school that wants to do everything for the people through the centralised state, he remarked, "No amount of force or Government or legislative cruelty will change the conditions of the race but it is the spiritual culture alone that can change wrong racial tendencies for the better."[25]

The Swami believed in the unlimited scope of religion as the supreme organising factor in the national life of India and pointed out that only religion can revive the lost individuality of the people. He advised the people to take all blames upon their own shoulders and work out their salvation by means of their own time-honoured methods of work without seeking for and extraneous favour or help. For he was thoroughly convinced that a people, fully conscious of its Prajadharma and well organised on the basis of religion on its own initiative, would in the near future be able to dictate terms to the State according to their evolved political consciousness. He made bold to declare : "All that England can do is to help India to work out her own salvation. All progress at the dictation of another whose hand is at India's throat, is valueless in my opinion. The highest work can only degenerate when slave labour produces it." In the same strain he added : "Tell me, whose wants are those, yours or the rulers ? If yours, will they supply them for you or will you have to do that for yourselves ? Never are the wants of a beggar fulfilled. Suppose the Government give you all you need, where are the men who are able to keep up the things demanded ? So make men first."

The Ideal State

Dwelling upon the conception of an ideal state, he discussed theocracy, monarchy and aristocracy, plutocracy, and lastly modern socialism and communism; and he arrived at the generalisation that human society is governed in turn by the priests, the soldiers, the traders and the labourers. In each of them he discovered both good and bad elements. He observed that the priest-rule had the evil of upholding the exclusive rights of the priests for the attaining and imparting of knowledge, but the bright side of it was that the foundation of all scientific and other knowledge was laid during the priest-period. The rule by the military class was tyrannical but not exclusive as the culture was shared by them with the other classes. The plutocracy or the rule by traders and capitalists prevailing today is dangerous because of its "silent, crushing and blood-sucking power" employed for the exploitation of the masses. But the advantage of the system is that the accumulated culture of previous ages is spread broadcast throughout the world in the course of its commercial activities. And lastly of the labour rule, the Swami said that the physical comfort would be distributed widely by it but probably culture and leaning would be lowered With these general remarks, the Swami reflected upon the future political scheme of humanity and thus described the Ideal State . "If it is possible to form a state in which the knowledge of the priest period, the culture of the military, the distributive spirit of the commercial and the ideal of equality of the last can all be kept intact, minus their evils, it will be an Ideal State :

> "The first three have had their day, now is the time for the last—they must have it—none can resist it. I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread.
>
> "The other systems have been tried and found wanting Let this one be tried,—if for nothing else, for the novelty of the thing. A redistribution of pain and pleasure is better than always the same person having pains and pleasures . . . . Let even every dog have its day in this miserable world . . .[26]

But these things can never come to pass unless man is

conscious of his divine nature and the oneness of human beings, and the Swami discovered in the Vedanta the only panacea for the socio-political evils of humanity. Specially with regard to India he insisted that all improvement must come through religion and declared that the modern theories of reconstruction can be perfected only through spirituality. He said, "All the social upheavalists, at least the leaders of them, are trying to find that all their communistic of equalising theories must have a spiritual basis, and that spiritual basis is the Vedanta only."

The Causes of our Political Degradation

It is no doubt a paradox of history that a people with such a strong spiritual foundation and a sound scheme of life based thereon has fallen to the depth of degradation,—that a people having such traditions of a lofty civic idealism coupled with an exalted spiritual outlook has sunk in poverty and despair, selfishness and jealousy, dissension and strife. The question naturally arises whether the political phase of our religious nationalism had any inherent drawback which marred our efforts at competing successfully with the political nationalism of other nations, whether the type of politics evolved in India is a type of medieval politics, whose necessity is no longer felt. Certainly, the Indian scheme of life received a rude shock inasmuch as the people had lost sight of their national idealism. The people shirked their duties and took to an easy-going life which gave rise to serious consequences retarding the political growth of the country. But this need not dishearten us now, for the serious national problems which ancient India herself had to tackle and tackled successfully may be solved in the way suggested by the Swami.

The Shastras enjoined upon the State and the people to observe closely their respective Dharma or duties; yet during particular epochs sections of the people were actuated by selfishness and made a demand for rights and privileges which upset our scheme of life. Times without number, the Kshatriyas in ancient India became mad with greed and ambition gave up the Dharma as laid down by the scriptures and exploited the poor masses for centuries. Sometimes they went so far as act against the dictates of the Vedas in order to satisfy their selfish ends. On the other hand, the priests forgetting their avowed Vedic ideal of serving the society through religious observances and dissemination of culture

made the Kshatriyas mere puppets in their hands, beguiled them by diplomacy and tactics and exploited by Vaisyas and the Sudras by imposing all sorts of queer superstitions upon them. Thus pre-Buddhistic India shows the mutual hatred and fight of these two rival classes, the priests and the Kshatriyas, whose struggle forms an interesting chapter in the ancient history of India.[27] About this the Swami remarks as follows :

> "The degeneration of India came not because the laws and the customs of the ancients were bad but because they were not allowed to be carried to their legitimate conclusion . . . Ancient India had for centuries been the battle-field for the ambitious projects of two of her foremost classes, the Brahmans and the Khatriyas. On the one hand, the priesthood stood against the lawless social tyranny of the princes over the masses, whom the Kshatriyas declared to be their legal food. On the other hand, the Kshatriya power was the one potent force which struggled with any political success against the spiritual tyranny of the priest-hood and the ever-increasing change of ceremonials which they were forging to bind down the people with." It is needless to mention that the Swami has here referred to the priests only and not to the selfless spiritual personages who were the salt of the society,—a fact which is evident from the pages of his "Vartaman Bharata" (Modern India).

Though there had been scattered tribal republics even from the Vedic period, they could not embrace the whole of India and develop into an All-India Federal Republic. The time was not ripe for the masses a general in ancient India to rise against the Kshatriya tyranny and make the self-governing institution perfect. The Swami says, "Even if the kings be of as god-like nature as that of Yudhishthira, Ramchandra, Dharmasoka or Akbar, under whose benign rule the people enjoyed safety and prosperity and were looked after with paternal care by their rulers, the hand of him who is always fed by another, gradually loses the power of taking the food to his mouth. His power of self-preservation can never become fully manifest, who is always protected in every respect by another. Even the strongest youth remains but a child

if he is always looked after as a child by his parent. Being always governed by kings of god-like nature to whom is left the whole duty of protecting and providing for the people, they can never get any occasion for understanding the principles of self-government. Such a nation being entirely dependent on the king for everything and never caring to exert itself for the common good or for self-defence, becomes gradually destitute of inherent energy and strength. If this state of dependence and protection continues long, it becomes the cause of the destruction of the nation, and its ruin is not far to seek. Of course, it can be reasonably concluded that when the Government of a country is guided by codes of laws enjoined by the Shastras which are the outcome of knowledge, inspired by the divine genius of great sages, such a Government will lead to the unbroken welfare of the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the king and the subjects alike. But we have seen already, how far the operation of those laws was or may be possible in practical life ! The voice of the ruled in the Government of their land,—which is the watch-word of the modern world, and of which the last expression has been echoed with a thundering voice in the Declaration of the American Government in the words, "That the Government of the people of this country must be by the people and for the good of the people"—cannot however be said to have been totally unrecognised in ancient India. The Greek travellers and others saw many independent states scattered all over this country, and references are also found to this effect in many places in the Buddhistic literature.[28] And there cannot be the least doubt that the germ of self-Government was at least present in the shape of the village Panchayat, which is still to be found in existence in many places of India." ("Vartaman Bharata" or Modern India).

Ideal Democracy

A democracy is successful so long as the people themselves are able to manage the political affairs of the country, on their own initiative. So, in order to evolve such a democracy in any country, the very first requisite is to train the people in such a manner that they may think for themselves and work out an all-sided scheme of life. There should be minimum of powers vested in a representative body for enacting and executing the laws in the

various spheres of life.

Democracy, as experimented in Europe, has miserably failed in developing the individuality of a man. Revolutions have come and gone in the Western world, sometimes completely changing the existing order of things. As a result of these upheavals the people, no doubt, wrested more deliberative and executive powers from the State, which were so long held by the minority for its own interests They however failed to manage the local affairs themselves and used to delegate powers to a representative body, meant for dictating everything to the masses. Thus the unthinking people had only to take part in the electioneering campaign, and when that was over, they allowed a body to think and do for them whatever was essentially needed in the political sphere of life.

But in an ideal democracy the people ought to take as much share in managing their own affairs as possible, allowing the representative body to exercise only so much of powers as will maintain a uniformity of the system throughout the territory. And to serve this purpose two conditions must be satisfied. First, there must be a system of education imparting the teachings of a common scheme of life to the people and enabling them withal to think and work for themselves. Secondly, to the representative body forming the State, only such powers are to be delegated as are required for protection and maintenance of the national scheme of life. The purpose of the State should mainly be to preserve the homogeneity of the system. There must be a thorough decentralisation of state affairs and people must from themselves into as many groups as possible to look after their own interests.

What we have said above is partially in accord with the conception of some of the advanced socio-political thinkers of the age. Some great thinkers of the day are seeing before their mind's eye a system, similar to this, slowly but steadily emerging out of the present chaotic political conditions.[29] The thinkers of the school of anarchist communism are the most advanced to believe in the efficacy of a thorough decentralisation. The advocates of state-socialism, on the other hand, are more for centralising the functions of the government. It is a movement directed against all private enterprises and private property, and introduced for nationalising all industrial, commercial and agricultural property. It is likely that in the near future the combination of the principles

of anarchist communism and State-socialism will materialise. It will allow the people a large scope for the management of their affairs on their own initiative, and at the same time form a well-represented State to keep up the homogeneity of the larger and inter-provincial spheres of activity.

But there may be two objections against this possible combination. First, whether it is practicable to train the uncultured masses who will be vested with responsibilities to think and work for a common purpose. Secondly, whether there is any narm if we can form a properly elected representative body which will be empowered with the deliberative and executive functions of the government. As for the first objection it may be answered that it undoubtedly requires decades for imparting such sound political training to the masses, but if democracy, worthy of its name, be the watch-word of the age, we have got no other alternative than to go to the very basis of the body-politic and begin our work there. To the second, our answer is that the development of the individuality of each man, so that he may think for himself and solve his own problems as well as of those of others, should be the goal of all human institutions. So, any centralised system of government cramping the free initiative of the people in the management of their affairs should be avoided as far as possible. Moreover, the constitutional history of Europe conclusively proves the utter failure of the elected minority to discharge its duty properly for a long time. No sooner has the power come to its hands than the minority directed by the programme of party politics forgets the sacred trust vested in it and becomes an additional burden to the majority of the people. The people have to rise against the State again and again, wrest power from it and form another representative body for their government. Time and again, this has happened in Europe. So, it is not better to direct the attention more to peacefully develop the initiative of the people at large than to ceaselessly fight to wrest powers from the government ?

Dichotomy of Rajdharma and Prajadharma

An ideal democracy thus presupposes a process of decentralisation, the State being vested with powers to protect and maintain the people's scheme of life in order that the homogeneity of the system may be preserved throughout the whole territory. The

traditional scheme of political life evolved in India has been long, long forgotten. It was partially revived by the Mahrattas; but since their fall the grand scheme has remained neglected. It is not possible to revive that scheme by merely focussing our attention on the State. Our first step towards political reconstruction is to enlighten the people and make them realise the programme of life enjoined by the Shastras. Thus when the Prajadharma will be reorganised to fit in with modern conditions, the people will rightly realise their relation with the State and the part it should play in their political scheme of life.

"The Hindu says," observed the Swami, "that political and social independence is well and good, but the real thing is spiritual independence, Mukti,* * *." Ransacking the political literature of ancient India, we find that this spiritual independence was the cherished goal of the political scheme. The constitutional laws contained in the Shastras were formulated by the sages who had no selfish interest or personal gain to derive from society. Mr. K.P. Jayaswal has rightly said in his "Hindu Polity" : "Apart from the operation of the coronation-oath, the checks and limitations imposed by the Paura-Janapada and the council, there was an all-powerful law, the common law of the Hindus, which is declared again and again to be above the king and as the king of kings. In Manu the king is made liable to be fined." He adds elsewhere : "Hermits and recluse thinkers living out of society were a political factor in Hindu life. . . . They with their wisdom and impartiality could take a correct view of a difficulty in administration, and could advise the king thereon without reserve or fear "

Upon spiritual thoughts and laws based thereon the dichotomy of Rajadharma and Prajadharma was developed in India. Thus, politics is not a dominating factor in the scheme of life but only an element in the great spiritual scheme of life. The Janapada and the Paura, the corporate associations of the country and the capital city, imbued with the spirit of Prajadharma inculcated in the Shastras, managed their local affairs on their own initiative. They could, as Mr. Jayaswal says, "depose the king and nominate his successor to the throne." On the other hand, the Rajadharma as enjoined in the Shastras, was observed by the king and the Parishad or Council of Ministers, which together formed the Central Government. Thus, under the same spiritual scheme, the Janapada and the Paura on the one hand, and the king with his

Parishad on the other, made a dichotomy which is a characteristic feature of Indian political life. Similar was the case with tribal republics or the Ganatantras and the United Republics or the Federation of the Ganatantras.[30]

"The Golden Age of his (the Hindu) polity lies not in the past but in the future," says Mr. Jayaswal. But be it remembered that the Golden Age can dawn only if our spiritual scheme of life is revived in its entirety and if the Paura and the Janpada, in one word the people can realise the Prajadharma and organise themselves into corporate associations on the basis of religion. Thus, the rehabilitation of our spiritual scheme of life is the very first step towards reviving our ancient politics. Secondly, when the people will have organised themselves on truly Indian lines as described above, it will not be difficult for them to form a State, properly represented by them, by limiting its scope merely to maintaining the homogeneity of the different units is the political system of the people. Therefore, in keeping with their time-honoured political principles as found in the Shastras the people of India will have here ample scope foi assimilating the best democratic and communistic ideals of today. Democratic ideals are not at all foreign to Indian genius. Even Lord Buddha organised his religious Order on a democratic basis by following the democratic institutions of the political India of his day.[31] The ideal political system that was confined to small groups in ancient India, must of course have an application throughout India at the present day.

The first step to national reconstruction in India thus demands that the people must be kept in the forefront of our programme of nation-building and the attention now focussed upon the Council Chambers must be directed to the masses of India. The Swami reminds us : "Remember that the nation lives in the Cottage. Keep the motto before you * * * 'Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion'. My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest, the ideas that the human race has developed both in and out of India and let them think for themselves. We are to put the chemicals together, and the crystallisation will be done by nature according to her laws."

If today a sound political philosophy based upon our national culture and genius is kept before us, it is sure that our political battle is immediately half-won. For, there must be some sound

principles of life and conduct, round which the people must rally, before their launching upon any movement towards national reconstruction.

The Task Before Us

A universal revival of religion in India is the first condition of growth, individual and national. This the Swami reiterated through his speeches and writings. "The truths of the Upanishads" said he, "are before you. Take them up, live upto them, and the salvation of India will be at hand". And again, "Teach yourselves, teach everyone his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul to see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when the sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity." With regard to the type of nationalism for which India stands the same maxim holds good. Without the broadcasting of the bold message of the Vedanta among the people all over India, there is hardly any possibility of their properly understanding the political phase of the scheme.

The dynamic aspect of the religion of the Vedanta has been long forgotten. After the decline of Buddhism, the Vedic religion was re-established by Acharya Sankara. After Sankara many other religious movements were started in mediaeval India; but their energy was mostly spent up in mere self-preservation and they had little time to rouse the creative impulses of men of different spheres of activity. The Swami said, "The fairs of the orders founded by Ramananda, Kabir, Dadu, Chaitanya or Nanak were all agreed in preaching the equality of men, however differing from one another in philosophy. Their energy was for the most part spent in checking the rapid conquest of Islam among the masses, and they had very little left to give birth to new thoughts and aspirations Though evidently successful in their purpose of keeping the masses within the fold of the old religion and tempering the fanaticism of the Mahomedans, they were mere apologists, struggling to obtain permission to live " To fulfil the need of the age, the Swami propounded Vedanta as a creative force, which will play its role in every department of the collective life of India. The underlying spirit of his teachings bearing upon Indian problems is to evolve a nation on the basis of spirituality.

As the foundation of the national life in India is religion,

there is necessity for a strongly organised body of self-less and spiritual men, as the custodian of the culture of India in all its aspects. The mission of such a body should be to cultivate practical spirituality and to spread the spiritual ideals in the country. This is the most important task. The Swami made an attempt to start such an organisation in the Ramkrishna Math and Mission. His two-fold object was : (1) to evolve a spiritual culture of harmony in which all religions will have distinct places of their own; and (2) to generate a new creative force in the life and activities of the people through such a universal spiritual culture. Obviously, such a non-sectarian movement will help the people of all denominations to realise the true ideals of Indian nationalism which is based on spirituality.

The people are to be organised along the path of the least resistance in and through their religions, the most dominant factor in the Indian view of life. The Swami says, "You can work under the law of least resistance, and the religious line is the line of least resistance in India." In and through the ideas of the Vedanta the people have to organise themselves from the villages upward. The ideals of the spiritual culture of India and the most advanced ideas and methods towards which the Western socio-political life is tending will join hands and give rise to a new civic consciousness on a religious basis. This new civic consciousness will be quite in keeping with our religious nationalism and will explain the 'Prajadharma' of our country. For the training and organising of the people along this line a band of selfless national workers, trained in the school of Indian culture will be required.

The intelligentsia of the country who have taken to Western modes of life and culture will have to be brought within the pale of Indian culture and civilisation. It is they who will guide, inspire and finance such a movement. The people under the present circumstances naturally look towards the intelligentsia, who, in order to guide them properly, must not only know the religious nationalism but should be imbued with the ideal of the Indian view of life. Once they are fired with this new civic consciousness the problem of India is half-solved. And when the people are well-organised on the basis of their Prajadharma, through their combined efforts, the intelligentsia and the masses will realise the ideal of the socio-political life of our religious nationalism.[32]

It is incumbent upon us today to review the type of nationalism which was a potent factor in the culture and civilisation of India Let us remember in conclusion, the lofty attitude of our ancients towards the science of politics as described in the Shantiparva of the Mahabharata :

> "When politics becomes lifeless, the triple Veda sinks, all the Dharmas, i.e., the bases of civilisation, howsoever developed, completely decay. When the traditional state-ethics are departed from all the bases of the divisions of individual life are shattered.
> In politics are realised all the forms of renunciation, in politics are united all the sacraments, in politics is combined all knowledge, in politics are centred all the words." (Quoted from the Hindu Polity by Mr. K.P. Jayaswal).

Tests of a Notional Worker

In order to actualise the political ideals of ancient India in the national life, Swami Vivekananda wanted to honey-comb the country with numberless nation-building institutions based upon a genuine spiritual idealism The soul of such an organisation must be a band of intensely spiritual and self-sacrificing young men who will work heart and soul for the country. About real patriot and patriotism that India needs in her hour of trial, the Swami observes :

> "I believe in patriotism, and I have my own ideal of patriotism Three things are necessary for great achievements. First, feel from the heart What is in the intellect or reason ? It goes a few steps and there it stops. But through the heart comes the inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates; love is the gate to all secrets of the universe. Feel, therefore, my would-be reformers, my would-be patriots ! Do you feel ? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next door neighbours to brutes ? Do you feel that millions are starving to day, and millions have been starving for ages ? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud ? Does it make you restless ? Does it make you sleepless ? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming

consonant with your heart-beat ? Has it made you almost mad ? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property; even your own bodies ? Have you done that ? That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step I did not go to America, as most of you know, for the Parliament of Religions, but this demon of a feeling was in me and within my soul. I travelled twelve years all over India, finding no way for my countrymen, and that is why I went to America. Most of you know that, who knew me then. Who cared about this Parliament of Religions ? Here was my own flesh and blood sinking every day, and who cared for them ? This was my first step.

"You may feel then; but instead of spending your energies in frothy talk, have you found any way out, any practical solution, some help instead of condemnation, some sweet words to soothe their miseries, to bring them out of this living deaths ? Yet that is not all. Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions ? If the whole world stands against you sword in hand, would you still dare to do what you think is right ? If your wives and children are against you, if all your money goes, your name dies, your wealth vanishes, would you still stick to it ? Would you still pursue it and go on steadily towards your own goal ? As the great king Bhartrihari says : "Let the sages blame or let them praise, let the goddess of fortune come or let her go wherever she likes; let death come today, or let it come in hundreds of years; he indeed is the steady man who does not move one inch from the way of truth. Have you got that steadfastness ? If you have these three things, each one of you will work miracles. You need not write in the newspapers, you need not go about lecturing, your very face will shine. If you live in a cave, your thoughts will penetrate even through the rock walls, will go vibrating all over the world for hundreds of years, may be, until they will fasten on to some brain and work out there. Such is the power of thought, of sincerity, and of purity of purpose."

THE SPIRITUAL BASIS

It is a lesson of Indian history that with the growth of spirituality, the entire national life thrives in all the spheres. Religion in this country is the fountain-head of all inspiration in learning and philosophy, arts and crafts, politics and economics. This peculiar stamp of religion upon the Indian mind can be gathered from Sanskrit literature. When Swami Vivekananda spoke of "the spiritual basis" he meant the recognition of religion as the store-house of all strength and the fullest use of its power on the various branches of our national activity.

Spirituality has to serve two definite purposes in the Indian life, as it has been doing from time immemorial. With regard to the individual, its function is to show the way to *Mukti* or liberation from the bondage of nature, to show the path to perfection in which the brutal instincts in man are given up and divine consciousness is roused. With regard to the nation, its function is to organise the verious national movements and direct them along proper channels. It is thus the supreme organising factor that will co-ordinate the scattered thoughts and activities of the country, both individual and collective

But the difficulty that arises here is two-fold. First, we are confronted with so many faiths and so many creeds in modern India that we are at our wit's end as to how to realise that religion can be the basis of our collective life, or in other words how it can be a nation-builder. For India is no longer the India of the Hindus alone. There are Christians, Mahomedans and others professing different faiths. So in speaking of the spiritual basis, no sectarian view can be taken. Secondly, an alien culture and civilisation, with its bright and dark sides, and with an alien scheme of life and mode of organisation, has spread in the country The marvellous manifestation of material power in the Western nation has dazzled our eyes. Being dominated by such a culture and trained in an alien school of thought, we are led to accept the principles of the Western collective life. And so, without paying any heed to what is our own and in which lies our strength, we are out for rousing in the people of India a political and civic consciousness similar to that in the people of the West. What we have to do is to accept the bright and useful side of the alien culture and civilisation, rejecting what is unsuited and foreign to

the genius of India.

Unification of Religions

"The first plank", says the Swami, "in the making of a future India, the first step that is to be hewn out of that rock of ages, is this unification of religions." And again, "We know that to the Indian mind, there is nothing higher than religious ideals, that this is the key-note of Indian life . . . . In the case of India, it is the only possible means of work; work in any other line, without first strengthening this, would be disastrous." Now how to bring about this unification of religions is the question of all questions before us.

Three methods can be followed to solve the problem. The first lies in the exclusive survival of a particular faith, to the exclusion and extinction of others. This method cruelly adopted by various races in different climes has left behind it the darkest spots in the pages of history. The "Time-spirit" would no longer tolerate it; and modern culture and civilisation abhors it. The second method is the process of ecclecticism by which some ideals from different religions are selected and put together. Such an ecceletic faith sooner or later becomes a creedal one due to its uncomprising attitude towards other faiths. In its zeal for placing the ideal religion before all, it invariably isolates itself from existing creeds and even comes to bear an attitude of intolerance towards them. The third and only method open to us is by synthesis—by harmony and reconciliation—which does not exclude any individual or religion and at the same time, teaches the unity of man and the unity of all faiths based on fundamental universal principles and spiritual realisations.

Unity in variety is the law of nature, and it should be the guiding motto of modern India. A religion which can unify the Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Christians and others by allowing perfect freedom for their individual growth should be the basis of her national life. But is it possible ? Or, is it a chimera ? The Swami saw the vision of a united India with "Vedantic brain and Islamic body" which made him buoyant with faith in such a religion. The following words of his, at once convincing and bold, mark an epoch, in the religious history of the world and clearly outline the future religion of India which will form the foundation of her collective life. Said he ;

"I accept all religions that were in the past and worship them all. I worship God with everyone of them in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go the Mosque of the Mahomedans, shall enter the Christian Church and kneel before the crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and his law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the light which enlightens the heart of everyone. Not only shall I do all these, but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future.

The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran and all other sacred books are but so many pages, an infite number of pages remains yet to be unfolded. I would leave it open for all of them."

Universal Religion

"Religion is neither in books, nor in intellectual consent, nor in reasoning. Reason, theories, documents, doctrines, books, religious ceremonies are all helps to religion, religion itself consists in realisation." So observed Swami Vivekananda. Had the significance of the above words been understood by the religious sects of India, much of our religious troubles would have been easily removed and the surest foundation of our national reconstruction laid by this time. The sooner the unfortunate communal disturbances which have been taking place in recent years open our eyes, the better In the interim, let some at least work silently for a better understanding among the warring communities so that each may live with others in peace and concord and yet maintain its individuality.

The Swami preached that universal religion which admits that all religions are fundamentally true and that they aim at the same ideal. The wonderful life of Sri Ramakrishna taught him how all religions can be reconciled. The Master lived and followed, in the most orthodox manner, the teachings of the Vedas, the Koran and the Bible, and through each of these he reached the same goal of spiritual realisation. The disciple could thus see vividly what should guide the destiny of India in which live men and women of various denominations and churches. To him the three prominent faiths in India were supplementary to one another. He saw

that each should seek the help of the others to make itself perfect. Assimilation of one another's ideals without denying the special feature of any one of them is the key-note of his message.

The Swami said, "We are firmly persuaded that without the help of Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas nor the Bible nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonising the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran. Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of the religion which is oneness so that each may choose the path that suits him best."

A clear conception of this ideal of oneness is the only means to harmonise the Vedas, the Koran and the Bible and to organise and strengthen all communities not for their self-aggrandisement, but for the noblest mission of building up a spiritual nation. Superstition and convention have taken the place of true religion The basic principles of all religions have to be taught to all. As a preliminary step a thorough comparative study of science and religion will help us much to give up superstitions and false dogmas. It will also enable us to interpret and understand religion in its true spirit.

We must know today where the religions agree and where they disagree. With regard to the points of agreement the Swami says, "Between all great religions of the world, there are many points of similarity, and so startling is this likeness, at times, as to suggest the idea that in many particulars the different religions have copied each other* * * Hencc it follows that the difference between the religions of the world is one of expression and not of substance." With regard to the disagreement he observes, "There has been more blood-shed in the name of God than for any other cause. People never went to the fountain head. They were content only to give a mental assent to the customs of their forefathers, and wanted others to do the same."

Survival of Religion

The history of all religions conclusively proves that all of them possess such a tremendous inherent strength as can never be inspired by any aggressive attack from outside. It will be an utter folly if one contemplates the survival of one's own faith alone to

the exclusion of others. All religions are based on the realisations of prophets and seers who are known for their piety and charity and who have, according to race and clime, formulated schemes of life so that various races and nations may become strong and pure and unfold the divine in them. The Swami reiterated the teaching of the history of the world when he said .

> "Those of you that watch the movement of the religious thought all over the world are perfectly aware that not one of the great religions of the world has died Not only so, each one of them is progressive. The Christians are multiplying, the Mahomedans are multiplying, the Hindus are gaining ground and the Jews, also, increasing,* * * the fold of Judaism is constantly expanding."

Mythology, Ritual and Philosophy

In every religion, there are three essential parts,—the philosophy, the mythology and the ritual. The philosophic portion of each faith contains the quintessence of its religion : in it we find the experiences of the seers in terms of the finest intellect. In this section of each living religion of the world, we come across some of the boldest conceptions, powerful enough to revolutionise the whole of mankind Propounders of all religions took recourse to various methods to broadcast these conceptions of God and Truth. They could see that the human mind is not always able to grasp these truths easily, that worthy recipients are always few. So they had to present them in the language of the people, and as a result mythology and ritual were introduced in every religious system.

Analysing the temperament of man we see that very few indeed are really rationalistic; the overwhelming majority is emotional. It is very difficult to preach the highest philosophy to the people at large. So every religion has evolved a system of rituals to be followed by the common people. And every religion has also saints and prophets in whom the abstract philosophical ideals were perfectly realised. The mythology in every religion trains the imaginative faculty of the adherents and, step by step, leads people to higher and higher spiritual ideals. An ordinary man is unable to realise the abstract conception of spirituality unless true or legendary lives of spiritual heroes explain the highest

philosophy, and the rituals concretise in the simplest possible manner the finest metaphysics. The Swami said : "You must remember, religions divide themselves generally into three parts. There is the first part consisting of the philosophy, the essence, the principles of every religion. These principles find expression in mythology, lives of saints or heroes, demi-gods or gods or divine beings. The third portion of all religions is symbolism, which you call ceremonials and forms. Even the expression through mythology, the lives of heroes, is not sufficient for all. There are minds still lower. Like children they must have their kindergarten of religion, and these symbologies have evolved concrete examples which they can handle and grasp and understand, which they can see and feel as material somethings "

It is only when we misunderstand the underlying purpose of mythology and rituals—their philosophic foundation—that we condemn them. The same philosophical foundation lies under the externals of all religions. So long as this remains unshaken sectarianism or fanaticism cannot degenerate us. Many of us have queer and confused ideas as to the true philosophy underlying all faiths. So neither the forms and ceremonials of one's own faith are observed in the true spirit nor the rites and dogmas of others properly honoured. The panacea lies in bringing out the universal philosophy underlying all faiths and interpreting the rites and dogmas of all religions from the standpoint of that universal philosophy. The Swami Vivekananda has wonderfully worked out for the modern world.

Great attempts have been made by so-called reformers and fanatic religious sects to do away with all rituals. But history shows that such movements have always failed, because of the fact that they did not study human nature in all its aspects. In all cases, one set of forms was kept out only to introduce another set to the people. The rise and fall of Buddhism in India, the progress of Protestant Christianity and the spread of Islam prove this statement.

Unless human nature is completely metamorphosed, there must be symbols and rites in some form or other in every faith. It is a vain effort to destroy them. The Swami says, "Every religious Mahomedan, wherever he prays, must imagine that he is standing in the temple of Kaba. When he goes on a pilgrimage thete, he must kiss the black-stone in the wall of the temple. All the kisses

that have been imprinted on that stone, by millions and millions of pilgrims, will stand up as witness for the benefit of the Faithful on the Last Day of Judgment. The Mahomedans believe that whoever draws a little water out of that well, will have his sins pardoned and he will, after the day of resurrection, have a fresh body and live for ever* * * * * The Protestants hold that churches are more sacred than other places. The church, as it is, stands for a symbol. Or there is the book. The idea of the book to them is much holier than any other symbol. It is vain to speak against the use of symbols."

Sacrifices of various kinds, found in all the established religions, have a history of their own. Sometimes they were formulated by sages and prophets so that some noble conceptions might be symbolically put before mankind Generally, they were crude social conventions of old to which spiritual idealism was added by thinkers at a later age. Be their origin as it may, we find that the same spiritual motive runs through all sacrifices in Hinduism, Islam, the animal sacrifice is observed only to teach the sacrifice of the "I" and the passions. In Christianity the Eucharist is proformed to call up Christ-consciousness in us. This is the significance of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ. In Hinduism, sacrifice is meant to teach us our identity with the Chosen Deity.[33]

Had we but sought the basic principles of all the dogmas in various religions, the religious problem in India would have been partly solved. Pregnant indeed is the Swami's utterance : "The same fundamental principles taught by my religion were also taught by all religions* * * * Whether a religion is taught in the forest and jungles of India or in a Christian land, in essentials all religions are one."

The Swami has further observed : "If there is ever to be a universal religion, it must be one which will have no location in place or time, which will be infinite like the God it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike; which will not be Brahminic, or Buddhistic, Christian or Mahomedan, but the sum-total of these and still have infinite space for development; which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for every human being, from the lowest grovelling savage not far removed from the brute to the highest man towering by the

virtues by his head and heart almost above humanity, making society stand in awe of him and doubt his human nature. It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognise divinity in every man and woman and whose whole force will be centred in aiding humanity to realise its own divine nature."

The Three View-points

Analysing all the existing faiths we find three well-defined view points from which the human mind has attempted to grasp the Reality, i.e , the nature of God, man and the world, and the relation between them. We may name these three stand-points as Dualism, Qualified Monism and Monism. Dualism teaches that God, man and nature are separate, that God is the Creator and man and nature are created by Him In Qualified Monism the ultimate Truth is the sum-total of God, soul and nature. As a tree is the sum-total of the roots, the trunk, the branches and the leaves, similarly the Truth comprehends every thing in the creation. According to this standpoint, God is like a great fire and the innumerable souls are so many sparks of that fire. In Monism, soul and nature are said to have only apparent existence. The Truth that is unqualified remains ever existing and the soul ultimately realises its complete identity with the Absolute Truth.

In almost all the religions of the world these three conceptions are found and they are also realised by various classes of aspirants. In the New Testament when Christ teaches of God, the Father in Heaven, we find Dualism; when he speaks of God as the vine and men as branches of it, we find Qualified Monism; and when on rare occasions he preaches, "My father and I are one, we find pure Monism Unfortunately, the orthodox Christian churches could not grasp these gradations of the spiritual consciousness taught by Christ. In Islam also we come across towering saints, both men and women, who lived and preached all the three conceptions of God. Rabeya set up an ideal of renunciation and love of God not only for the Muslims but for humanity at large. The realisation of his complete identity with God by the famous Hossain Monsoor sufficiently proves that Islam did not lack the conception of the monistic ideal found in the Upanishads. In Hinduism also these standpoints have been represented by the spiritual thinkers, of whom Madhva, Ramanuja and Sankara are

the foremost. In short, these conceptions are the common property of almost all religions.

Confusion in religious ideas and ideals arise from the fact of our missing the true import of the relation between Dualism, Qualified Monism and Monism. That they dawn upon man's consciousness one after the other in the course of the spiritual unfolding of the soul is generally lost sight of The Dualism naturally merges itself into Qualified Monism and Qualified Monism into Absolute Monism is a fact overlooked by many a thinker. Most of the philosophers in India upheld their philosophic position as the final one and took recourse to 'text-torturing' when they came across any scriptural passages clearly stating any other position. Even men like Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva were not free from such basis in the interpretation of the texts of the Upanishads and other scriptures The followers of Islam and Christianity also could not do full justice to Absolute Monism found in the Bible and realised by saints and seers of Islam. If we realise the harmony of these three stages of realisation, much of the strife between different sects will vanish in no time.

Harmony of these three conceptions must be the cementing factor in the reinterpretation of the religions in India. To cleanse our mind of all bigotry, it is well to remember what the Swami said : "To the Hindu, man is not travelling from error to truth but from truth to truth, from lower to higher truth. To him all the religions from the lowest fetichism to the highest absolutism, means so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realise the Infinite, each determined by the conditions of its birth and association, and each of these marks a state of progress, and every soul is a young eagle soaring higher and higher gathering more and more strength till it reaches the Glorious Sun."

So long as a man takes for granted the five senses and the mind, he cannot but accept Dualism and Qualified Monism. But when after sustained spiritual practice, the mind and the intellect vanish away, in individual spontaneously realises the oneness of God and man, The Swami says :

> "Dualism is the natural idea of the senses; as long as we are bound by the senses we are bound to see a God, who is only personal, and nothing but personal, we are bound to see the world as it is. Says Ramanuja, 'So long as you think you

are a body and you think you are a mind, and you think you are a Jiva, every act of perception will give you the three,—God, Soul and Nature, and something as causing both ' But yet at the same time, even the idea of the body disappears where the mind itself becomes finer and finer till it has almost disappeared, when all the different things that make us weak and bind us down to this body-life have disappeared. Then and then alone one finds out the truth of that grand old teaching : "Thus seeing the Lord the same everywhere he, the sage, does not hurt the self by the self and so goes to the highest goal."

Monism

It is only through a clear conception of this Monistic Oneness that we can truly reconcile the other two view-points. Even while preaching the Dualistic or Qualified Monistic aspects of Truth we have to be convinced of the ultimate goal of oneness. This will make the aspirant's success surer and save him from bigotry and fanaticism, and enable him to respect others' faiths as so many relative readings of the Absolute Oneness. There is a significant teaching of Sri Ramakrishna, "Taking the knowledge of Advaita in the skirt of your cloth, go wherever you like." Here we find rationale of Swami Vivekananda's dream to make a new experiment with Monistic Vedanta in the life of humanity. He said :

"The Monistic—Vedanta is the simplest form in which you can put truth. To preach Dualism only was a tremendous mistake made in India and elsewhere, because people did not look at the ultimate principles but only thought of the process which is very intricate indeed. To many, these tremendous philosophical and logical propositions were alarming. They thought these things could not be made universal, could not be followed in everyday practical life, and that under the guise of such a philosophy much laxity of living would arise." He also observed : "Dualistic ideas have ruled the world long enough, and this is the result; why not make a new experiment ?"

'Virat.' The reformers and workers bent on serving India socially, politically, or otherwise, are to be imbued with this grand idealism of the Virat, concretised in India. It is this transformation of vision with regard to our holy land which the Swami teaches as one of the potent means for spiritualising our national activities.

> "For the next fifty years, this alone shall be our keynote,—this, our great Mother India. Let all other vain Gods disappear for a time from our minds. This is the only God that is awake, our own race, everywhere His hands, everywhere His feet everywhere His ears, He covers everything. All other Gods are sleeping. What vain Gods we shall go after and yet cannot worship the God that we see all round us, the Virat? When we have worshipped this, we shall be able to worship other Gods."

For the unification of all religions prevailing in India, the Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Christians and others badly need a universal religion, acceptable to all. By such a creed, the dogmas and the rituals of all sects might be interpreted in a new light, and fresher ones added unto each creed according to the need of the hour. There is the hope of a glorious spiritual India rising in the near future, and the present communal disturbances, though unfortunate, seem to indicate the subconscious national struggle for a fundamental religious unity. The emergence of a Renascent India was as clear as daylight to Swami Vivekananda who has left the following universal religion for posterity :

> "Each soul is potentially divine.
> "The goal is to manifest the divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal.
> "Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these, and be free.
> "This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details."

CONCLUSION

The Secret of Indian History

We have dwelt at length on the basic principles of Indian

Nationalism and Nation-Building in India as realised and propounded by Swami Vivekananda. An attempt has been made to apply the historic-philosophical method in corroborating the views of the Swami in regard to the spiritual, social and political ideals or 'values,' which have been handed down to us. It is very difficult to discover the synthetic culture of India by a mere intellectual study of the various details of our past history. It is equally difficult to find out the harmony and unity underlying the heaps of scriptures, apparently contradictory, by a mere knowledge of facts. A deep insight is required to understand the peculiar 'mental images' of the people and the spiritual thought-currents shaping and reshaping the history of the country. No correct view of the problems, far less their solution, is possible without a profound intuitive vision of the 'Spiritual Force' that has been working in India from time immemorial.

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa

The synthetic spirituality of the Vedas was again revealed in this age in the life of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, sitting at whose feet, the Swami re-discovered the importance of Indian spirituality in reshaping the destiny of India. The various schools of philosophy and the different systems of elaborate symbolism that lay scattered throughout the country among the different sects and denominations were harmonised in the life of Sri Ramakrishna. The true spirit and significance of the Tantras, at which our Westernised countrymen used to cast a fling, was re-discovered in his life. The two creeds, Islam and Christianity, which were supposed to be antithetic to the spiritual culture of India, were found reconciled with the Vedic culture in his spiritual Sadhana. Having direct spiritual experiences in the practice of these two faiths, Shri Ramakrishna declared that they too are true paths to perfection. Thus, all the established religions in India were lived by him and the truths of all scriptures vindicated through his own realisations.

From an intuitive vision as well as a deep historical study of India's past and present, Swami Vivekananda saw that spirituality is the basis of her national life. He also found that this spirituality had been revealed in the wonderful life of his Guru in its widest scope and deepest significance—the spirituality that could enthuse all sects of India for achieving a common purpose,

and that offered opportunities to all people to be culturally progressive along their own lines. He made bold to preach this synthetic spirituality as the organising principle of the collective life of the people. What the Swami meant by religion as the nation-builder or the organising force was that the ideals of spirituality must be a potent factor in rebuilding our society. Like other nations of the world India cannot handle her national problems merely to attain wordly enjoyments. Her motive in tackling these problems is altogether different. India evolves society, builds politics and organises economics for the collective pursuit of spirituality. The ideal of Mukti or liberation is placed before all; and the supreme good lies in the attainment of this ideal through social, political and economic schemes of life which are designed for the self-purification of the individuals of the body-politics. Here the spiritual scheme of life evolved in India makes a departure from the secular scheme of life evolved by other nations.

The Socio-Political Scheme

Dazzled by an alien culture, we have lost sight of this fundamental and distinctive feature of our life, social, economic and political. None can deny the fact that in this age when the entire world-culture has come to stay with us, it is not possible to reject Western culture in toto. In regard to the various methods of organisation relating to the spheres of national activity, we have to learn many things from the West. But if we so advance as to give up our basic foundations of politics and society, the result will be disastrous, for, then India will no more remain true to herself but be a despicable replica of the materialistic West. The nationalism of Vivekananda therefore presents a bold front towards this Westernisation of our thought and activity. It behoves our educated countrymen, therefore, to realise the gravity of the situation and to pause to think over the *modus operandi* formulated by the Swami.

Brahminhood is the socio-political goal of India. The scheme of four castes was so framed that diverse types and ethnic groups might advance step by step and become Brahmins at last. On the lowest rung of the social ladder is the Chandala and on the top-most rung is the Brahmin. The sole object of the social scheme is to introduce a culture and a spiritual discipline among

the sects which are culturally low and to take them to the higher rungs step by step. Thus, the sole object of the practice, preservation and diffusion of spirituality is to be carried out by our reformers today in order that society may regain its lost vitality and solve problems along the time-honoured national lines as has been dealt with in the chapter on Social Reconstruction.

Coming next to the type of Indian politics, we find in the light of Swami Vivekananda, how religion exerts its influence upon politics. First, politics is a Dharma to purify the members of the body-politic for the manifestation of spirituality lying dormant in us. Secondly, the dichotomy of Rajadharma and Prajadharma under one spiritual scheme with a thorough decentralisation of state functions is quite up to the mark and in line with the advanced political thoughts of some of the eminent thinkers of the West. Thirdly, the system of a thorough decentralisation serves two purposes : It enables the people to become democratic in the truest sense of the term; and it also helps them to transform work into worship. Decentralisation allows larger opportunities to the people for directly shouldering political responsibilities, and the spiritual idealism also finds a better expression in the work done. We have elaborated all these issues in the chapter on Political Reconstruction.

The Message of Swami Vivekananda

In conclusion, we reiterate that the Swami's message is the message of reconstruction of our national life on spiritual basis. He sought to re-introduce the spiritual scheme of life which was evolved in ancient India and wanted to make it dynamic again by the assimilation of the best elements of Western culture. May our humble endeavour create an interest in the message of the Swami and his method of work ! May our educated countrymen find in them guidence for the solutions of the bewildering national problems of the day ! May we have firm faith in Mother India and in her spiritual culture as well as in the Swami's vision of a future India more glorious than her past !—a vision which inspired him to utter :

> "I do not see into the future, nor do I care to see. But one vision I see clear as light before me. That the ancient Mother has awakened once more seating on her throne, rejuvenated,

more vigorous than ever. Proclaim her to all the world, with the voice of peace and benediction."

May the appeal to unity as made by the Vedic Rishi find a response in the hearts of all !

"Common be your desires, united be your hearts, united be your intention, so that there be a thorough union among you."

Awake, arise, and stop not till the goal is reached.

Notes and References

1 "It was Swami Vivekananda who said that when India becomes English, she dies If this be so, all intermediate steps towards such a result spell weakness. When the sufficiently nourished and the healthy Indian has sought for mental and spiritual power in his own cultural traditions and has failed to get it, it will then be the time to discuss whether his want of success is due to his alleged barbarism or to the faulty principles of his civilisation or not, and if so in what respect and degree." (Sir John Woodroffe *Is India Civilised ?* p. 263).

2 "The paragon of all monistic system is the Vedanta philosophy of Hindostan and the paragon of Vedantist missionaries was the late Swami Vivekananda who visited our land some years ago." (William James · *Pragmatism*, p 151).

3. "The genius of the East and the genius of the West combined in one noble effort, may solve peacefully and beneficently for innumerable centuries the complicated economic and social problems which now face us, to the permanent advantage and enjoyment of all " (H.M. Hyndman : *The Awakening of Asia, Conclusion*)
See also Okakura's *Ideals of the East, and the Awakening of Japan.*

4 "The spiritual motive dominates life in India Indian philosophy has its interests in the haunts of men and not in supra-lunar solitude. It takes its origin in life and enters back into life after passing through the schools * * * The Gita and the Upanishads are not remote from popular belief * * * The founders of philosophy strive for a socio-spiritual reformation of the country " (S Radhakrishnan . *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I , Chap. I., p. 25)

5 Cf Aurobindo Ghosh who dwells on the type of Indian nationalism in his works See Coomaraswamy *Essays on National Idealism* and R.K Mukherjee *The Foundations of Indian Economics*, Chap. V

6 Cf Karl Marx who has established the systematic labour theory and also preached to doctrine of Anarchist Communism.

7. See R C Mazumdar, *Corporate Life in Ancient India* and R.K. Mukherjee *Local Government in Ancient India.*

8 Cf The spread of Islam in Arabia, the influence of Buddhism in Central Asia and the civilising power of Christianity in Mediaeval Europe.
9 See Tolstoy · *Social Evils and their Remedy*
10. In introducing his hero, John Christopher, M Rolland writes :
"I was isolated : like so many others in France I was stifling in a world morally inimical to me · I wanted air I wanted to react against an unhealthy civilisation, against ideas corrupted by a sham elite : I wanted to say to them "You lie ! You do not represent France !" To do so I needed a hero with a pure heart and unclouded vision whose soul would be stainless enough for him to have the right to speak one whose voice would be loud enough for him to gain a hearing. I have patiently begotten this hero "
11. "They sought for a bare, simplified and rationalised religion, created a literature which imported very eagerly the forms, ideas, and whole spirit of their English models, the value of the other arts was almost entirely ignored—put their political faith and hope in a wholesale assimilation or rather an exact imitation of the middle-class pseudo-democracy of nineteenth century English—would have revolutionised Indian society by introducing into it all the social ideals and main features of the European form. Whatever values for the future there may be in the things they grasped at with this eager conviction, their method was, as we now recognise, as false method—" (Aurobinda Ghosh *The Renaissance in India*, pp. 39-40)
See Ronaldshay *The Heart of Aryavarta*, Chap. V.
12 Cf The history of the Dasyus in the Rigveda . Sj. Haraprasad Shastry's researches on the Vratyas in ancient India, the Vanaras and the Rakshass in the Ramayana, the Nagas in the Mahabharata, and the Greeks, the Sakas and the Huns of latter ages.
13. For fuller details of ancient civilisations, see P N. Bose : *Epochs of Civilisation*
14 See P. Kropotkin *Conquest of Bread.*
15. See B G. Tilak *Arctic Home of the Aryans*, Abinash Chandra Gupta : *Rig-Vedic India*, R.C Dutta . *Civilisation in Ancient India*; For the criticism of B G. Tilak's theory, vide *The Arctic Home in Rig-Veda : an untenable position*, by N.K. Dutta The Dacca Review, 1916.
16. See S C Pal : *The Soul of India*, pp. 98-122
17 See R.K. Mukherjee . Local Government in Ancient India; R C Mazumdar; Corporate Life in Ancient India.
18. See Zenaide A. Ragozin . *Vedic India*, Chap. VIII
19. See Sister Nivedita : *Foot-falls of Indian history.*
20 See Ranade . *Rise of the Mahratta power.*
21. See R K Mukherjee . *Foundations of Indian Economics.*
22 See Rajendra Lala Mitra . *Indo-Aryans*, Vol. I, Chapter VI.
23. About Hindu culture and civilisation, see B C Pal : *The Soul of India*, and S. Radhakrishnan *The Hindu View of life*
24 See Tolstoy : *Social evils and their remedy.*
25. Cf Tolstoy : *Slavery of our times*, and Mazzini : *Duties of man.*

26 For modern theories on socialism, anarchism, etc , see Bertrand Russell *Roads of Freedom*

27 About the struggle between Vasistha and Viswamitra and the story of Vasistha's sacred cow, creating an army of Sakas Yavanas, Huns, etc, see Mahabharata, Adi Parva, Chaps 175-76

Sir W.W Hunter says

"From remote antiquity two great tribes of Indo-Aryans appear in bold contradistinction to each other, the Kshatriyas and the Brahmanas The latter in the end obtained the supremacy and their superior culture made them the sole chroniclers of the strife But even their partial legends describe twenty-one great struggles, each closing with the alleged extirpation of the Kshatriyas, but the next one always opening with them as rampant as ever It seems in accordance with the facts of universal history that in the long struggle the Brahmana should seek alliance with the aboriginal tribes "

28 See K P Jsyaswal *Hindu Polity*, and Rhys Davids *Buddhist India*

29 See Bertrand Russell *Roads to Freedom*, Introduction and Chapter VIII, pp 199-201

30 For details of the political constitutions in ancient India see K P Jayaswal *Hindu Polity*, and Madhusudan Bhattacharya *Hindu Rajniti*, (Ratnamala, Pratham-Khanda)

31 "The principles of the Sakiya republic, nay, the entire philosophy of democratic republicanism, found an able exponent in Sakya, the Buddha who, though he renounced the family ties, remained an active propagandist all his life And the propaganda embraced lectures on constitutional law, trial by jury, *res judicata*, government by the majority, the importance of public meetings and all other branches of civic life as much as the pathway to salvation and the elimination of misery from the world of men

(Benoy Kumar Sarkar *The Ganas or republics in ancient India*, Modern Review for March, 1920)

32 See J W Petavel *Self-Government and the Bread-problem*, lecture III, p 68

Dwelling on the Indian National Congress Sister Nivedita said

"The Congress represents, not a political, or partisan movement, but the political side of a national movement—a very different thing * * * This implies that the main body of the army is not in the Congress, that the Congress as a whole is merely one side,—the political side—of an incomparably vaster, though less definitely organised host * * * Thus corresponding to the Congress, the national movement must have another and non-political limb, as it were "

(*Civic and National ideals*, pp 51-53)

33 See Ramendra Sundar Trivedi · *Yajnakatha*

24

THE NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S LIFE AND WORK

SISTER NIVEDITA

Of the bodily presence of him who was known to the world as Vivekananda, all that remains today is a bowl of ashes. The light that has burned in seclusion during the last five years by our river side, has gone out now The great voice that rang out across the nations is hushed in death Life came then to this mighty soul as storm and pain. But the end was peace. Silently, at the close of evensong, on a dark night of Kali, came the benediction of death The weary and tortured body was laid down gently and the triumphant spirit was restored to the eternal Smadhi.

He passed, when the laurels of his first achievements were yet green He passed, when new and greater calls were ringing in his ears Quietly, in the beautiful home of his illness, the intervening years with some few breaks, went by amongst plants and animals, unostentatiously training the disciples who gathered round him, silently ignoring the great fame that had shone upon his name. Man-making was his own stern brief summary of the work that was worth doing. And laboriously, unflaggingly, day after day, he set himself to man-making playing the part of Guru, of father, even of schoolmaster, by turns The very afternoon of the day he left us, had he not spent three hours in giving a Sanskrit lesson on the Vedas ?

External success and leadership were nothing to such a man.

During his years in the West, he made rich and powerful friends, who would gladly have retained him in their midst. But for him, the Occident, with all its luxuries, had no charms To him, the garb of a beggar, the lanes of Calcutta, and the disabilities of his own people, were more dear than all the glory of the foreigner, and detaining hands had to loose their hold of one who passed ever onward toward the East.

What was the West heard in him, leading so many to hail and cherish his name as that of one of the greatest religious teachers of the world ? He made no personal claim. He told no personal story. One whom he knew and trusted long had never heard that he had any position of distinction amongst his Gurubhais. He made no attempt to popularise with strangers any single form of creed, whether of God or Guru. Rather, through him, the mighty torrent of Hinduism poured forth its cooling waters upon the intellectual and spiritual worlds, fresh from its secret sources in Himalayan snows. A witness to the vast religious culture of Indian homes and holy men he could never cease to be Yet he quoted nothing but the Upanishadas He taught nothing but the Vedanta. And men trembled, for they heard the voice for the time of the religious teacher who feared not Truth.

Do we not all know the song that tells of Siva as he passess along the roadside, "Some say He is mad. Some say He is the Devil. Some say—don't you know ?—He is the Lord Himself !"? Even so India is similar with the thought that every great personality in the meeting-place and reconciliation of opposing ideals To his disciples, Vivekananda, will ever remain the arch-type of the Sannyasin. Burning renunciation was chief of all the inspirations that spoke to us through him. "Let me die a true Sannyasin as my faster did," he exclaimed once, passionately, "heedings of money, of women, and of fame ! And of these the most insidious is the love of fame !" Yet the self-time destiny that filled him with this burning thirst of intense vairagyam embodied in him also the ideal householder—full of the yearning to protect and save, eager to learn and teach the use of materials, reaching on towards the reorganisation and re-ordering of life. In this respect, indeed, he belonged to the race of Benedict and Bernard, of Robert de Citcaux and Loyola It may be said that just as in Francis of Assissi, the yellow robe of the Indian Sannyasin gleams for a moment in the history of the Catholic Church, so in

Vivekananda the great saint, abbots of Western monasticism are born anew in the East.

Similarly, he was at once a sublime expression of superconscious religion and one of the greatest patriot ever born. He lived at a moment of national disintegration, and he was fearless of the new. He lived when men were abandoning their inheritance, and he was an ardent worshipper of the old. In him the national destiny fulfilled itself, that a new wave of consciousness should be inaugurated always in the leaders of the Faith. In such a man it may be that we possess the whole Veda of the future. We must remember, however, that the moment has not come for gauging the religious significance of Vivekananda. Religion is living seed, and his sowing is but over. The time of his harvest is not yet.

But death actually gives the Patriot to his country. When the master has passed away from the midst of his disciples, when the murmers of his critics are all hushed at the burning-ghat, then the great voice that spoke of freedom rings out unchallenged and whole nations answer as one man. Here was a mind that had unique opportunities of observing the people of many countries intimately East and West he had seen and been received by the high and low alike His brilliant intellect had never failed to gauge what it saw. "America will solve the problems of the Sudras but through what awful turmoil !" he said many times. On a second visit, however, he felt tempted to change his mind, seeing the greed of wealth and the lust of oppression in the West, and comparing these with the calm dignity and ethical stability of the old Asiatic conditions formulated by China many centuries ago. His great acumen was yoked to a marvellous humanity. Never had we dreamt of such a gospel of hope for the Negro as that with which rounded on an American gentleman who spoke of the African races with contempt. And when, in the Southern States he was occasionally taken for "a coloured man," and turned away from some door as such (a mistake that was always atoned for as soon as discovered by the lavish hospitality of the most responsible families of the place), he was never known to deny the imputation. "Would it not have been refusing my brother ? he said simply when he was asked the reason of this silence.

To him each race had its own greatness and shone in the light of that central quality. There was no Europe without the Turk, on Egypt without the development of the people of the soil. England

had grasped the secret of obedience with self-respect. To speak of my patriotism in the same breath with Japan's was sacrilege.

What then was the prophecy that Vivekananda left in his own people ? With what national significance has he filled that gerrua mantle that he dropped behind him in his passing ? Is it for us perhaps to lift the yellow rags upon our flagpole, and carry them forward as our banner ? Assuredly—For here was a man who never dreamt of failure. Here was a man who spoke of naught but strength. Supremely free from sentimentality, supremely defiant of all authority (are not missionary slanders still ringing in our ears ? Are not some of them to be accepted with fresh accessions of pride ?) he refused to meet any foreigner save as the master. "The Swami's great genius lies in his dignity," said an Englishman who knew him well, "it is nothing short of royal !" He had grasped the great fact that the East must come to the West, not as a sycophant, not as a servant, but as Guru and teacher, and never did he lower the flag of his personal ascendancy, "Let Europeans lead us in Religion !" he would say, with a scorn too deep to be anything but merry "I have never spoken of revenge," he said once. "I have always spoken of strength. Do we dream of revenging ourselves on this drop of sea-spray ? But it is a great thing to a mosquito! "

To him, nothing Indian required apology. Did anything seem to the pseudo-refinement of the alien, barbarous of crude ? Without denying, without minimising anything, his colossal energy was immediately concentrated on the vindication of that particular point, and the unfortunate critic was tossed backwards and forwards on the horns of his own argument. One such instance occurred when an Englishman on boardship asked him some sneering question about the Puranas, and never can any who were present forget how he was pulverised, by a reply that made the Hindu Puranas, compare favourably with the Christian Gospels, but planted the Vedas and Upanishads high up beyond the reach of any rival. There was no friend that he would not sacrifice without mercy of such a moment in the name of National Defence. Such an attitude was not, perhaps, always reasonable. It was often indeed frankly unpleasant. But it was superb in the manliness that even enemies must admire. To Vivekananda, again, everything Indian was absolutely and equally sacred,—"This land to which must come all souls wending their way Godward !" his religious

consciousness tenderly phrased it. At Chicago, any Indian man attending the Great World Bazaar, rich or poor, high or low, Hindu, Muhammedan, Parsi, what not might at any moment be brought by him to his hosts for hospitality and entertainment and they well knew that and failure of kindness on their part to the least of these would immediately have cost them his presence.

He was himself the exponent of Hinduism, but finding another Indian religionist struggling with the difficulty of presenting his case, he sat down and wrote his speech for him, making a better story for his friend's faith than its down adherent could have done !

He took infinite pains to teach European disciples to eat with their fingers, and perform the ordinary simple acts of Hindu life. "Remember, if you love India at all, you must love her as she is, not as you might wish her to become" he used to say. And it was this great firmness of his, standing like a rock for what actually was, that did more than any other single fact, perhaps, to open the eyes of those aliens who loved him to the beauty and strength of that ancient poem,—the common life of the common Indian people. For his own part, he was too free from the desire for approbation to make a single concession to new-fangled ways. The best of every land had been offered him, but it left him still the simple Hindu of the old style, too proud of his simplicity to find any need of change. "After Ramakrishna, I follow Vidyasagar !" he exclaimed, only two days before his death, and out came the oft-repeated story of the wooden sandals coming pitter patter with the chudder and dhoti, into the Vice-regal Council Chamber, and the surprised. "But if you didn't want me, why did you ask me to come ?" of the old Pundit, when they remonstrated.

Such points, however, are only interesting as personal characteristics. Of a deeper importance is the question as to the conviction that spoke through them. What was this ? Whether did it tend ? His whole life was a search for the common basis of Hinduism. To his sound judgment the idea that two pice postage, cheap travel, and a common language of affairs could crude a national unity, was obviously childish and superficial. These things could only be made to serve old India's turn if she already possessed a deep organic unity of which they might conveniently become an expression. Was such a unity existent or not ? For something like eight years he wandered about the land changing

his name at every village, learning of every one he met, gaining a vision as accurate and minute as it was profound and general. It was this great quest that overshadowed him with its certainty when, at the Parliament of Religions, he stood before the West and proved that Hinduism converged upon a single imperative of perfect freedom so completely as to be fully capable of intellectual aggression as any other faith.

It never occurred to him that his own people were in any respect less than the equals of any other nation whatsoever. Being well aware that religion was their national expression, he was also aware that the strength which they might display in that sphere, would be followed before long, by every other conceivable form of strength.

As a profound student of caste,—his conversation seemed with its unexpected particulars and paradoxes !—he found the key to Indian unity in its exclusiveness. Mahommedans were but a single caste of the nation. Christians another, Parsis another, and so on ! It was true that of all these (with the partial exception of the last), non-belief in caste was a caste distinction. But then, the same was true of the Brahmo Samaj and other modern sects of Hinduism. Behind all alike stood the great common facts of one soil; one beautiful old routine of ancestral civilisation, and the overwhelming necessities that must inevitably lead at last to common loves and common hates.

But he had learnt, not only the hopes and ideals of every sect and group of the Indian people, but their memories also. A child of the Hindu quarter of Calcutta, returned to live by the Ganges-side, one would have supposed from his enthusiasm that he had been born, now in the Punjab, again in the Himalayas, at a third moment in Rajputana, or elsewhere. The songs of Guru Nanak alternated with those of Meera Bai and Thana Sena on his lips. Stories of Prithvi Rai and Delhi jostled against those of Cheetore and Pratap Singh, Siva and Uma, Radha and Krishna, Sita-Ram and Buddha. Each mighty drama lived in a marvellous actuality, when he was the player. His whole heart and soul was a burning epic of the country, touched to an overflow of mystic passion by her very name.

Seated in his retreat at Belur, Vivekananda received visits and communications from all quarters. The vast surface might be silent, but deep in the heart of India, the Swami was never

forgotten. None could afford, still fewer wished, to ignore him. No hope but was spoken into his ear,—no woe but he knew it, and strove to comfort or to rouse. Thus, as always in the case of a religious leader the India that he saw, presented a spectacle strangely unlike that visible to my other eye. For he held in his hands the thread of all that was fundamental, organic, vital; he knew the secret springs of life, he understood with what word to touch the heart of millions. And he had gathered from all this knowledge a clear and certain hope.

Let others blunder as they might. To him, the country was young, the Indian vernaculars still flexible, the national energy unexploited. The India of his dreams was in the future. The new phase of consciousness initiated today through pain and suffering was to be but the first step in a long solution. To him his country's hope was in herself. Never in the alien. True, his great heart embraced the alien's need, sounding a universal promise to the world But he never sought for help, or begged assistance. He never learned on my, what might be done, it was the doer's privilege to do, not the recipient's to accept. He had neither ours nor hopes from without. To reassert that which was India's essential self, and leave the great stream of the national life, strong in a fresh self-confidence and vigour, to find its own way to the ocean, this was the meaning of his sannyas. For his was pre-eminently the sannyas of the greater service. To him, India, was Hinduistic, Aryan, Asiatic. Her youth might made their own experiments in modern luxury. Had they not the right ? Would they not return ? But the great deeps of her being were normal, austere and spiritual. A people who could embrace death by the Ganges-side were not long to be distracted by the glamour of mere mechanical power.

Buddha had preached renunciation, and in two centuries India had become an Empire. Let her but once more feel the great pulse through all her veins, and no power on earth would stand before her newly awakened energy. Only, it would be in her own life that she would find life, not in imitation; from her own proper past and environment that she would draw inspiration, not from the foreigner. For he who thinks himself weak is weak : he who believes that he is strong is already invincible. An so for his nation, as for every individual, Vivekananda had but one word,

one constantly reiterated message :

"Awake ! Arise ! Struggle on,
And stop not till the
Goal is reached !"

25

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER

SATINDRA MOHAN CHATTERJEE

THE ENVIRONMENT

Swami Vivekananda was born in Calcutta on 12th January, 1863, six years after the Indian Mutiny But the Mutiny touched Bengal only slightly, and there was no scent of rebellion in the air when Swamiji was born. On the contrary, the period that preceded and followed the rising was generally lifeless It bore clear signs of servility to and imitation of the West.

But there was an inner conflict in the age itself It was a conflict between abject surrender and a growing sense of dignity in a fallen nation. It was a challenge of the Indian cultural heritage to the currents of European thought which was rushing in This challenge and the resultant conflict produced sparks which accounted for a galaxy of great men who were born in Bengal in the nineteenth century. Swamiji was a perfect representative of his age and, if we want to understand him, we must have an insight into his environment

Sister Nivedita has analysed the influences which moulded Swamiji's character. She said .

"The formative influence in his life was three-fold.
First, his education in English, and Sanskrit-literature
Second, the great personality of his Guru, illustrating and authenticating that life which formed the theme of all sacred

writings :
And thirdly, his personal knowledge of India and Indian people."

These observations are correct as far as they go, but they are not adequate They need some supplements. Primarily, Swami Vivekananda was a revivalist of the mid-nineteenth century which ushered in a new era in Bengal or rather in India. Like others of his clan, he was at once sturdy, patriotic and masculine but initially torn between the horns of a dilemma. Secondly, Sree Ramakrishna's influence on him was no doubt great but perhaps greater was his individual rationalism : thirdly, a wide personal knowledge of India did definitely influence his views, but no less a formative factor was his close study of the West and his realization of the failure of his own mission there.

The history of nineteenth-century Bengal is a story of turmoil, struggle and advancement. Half a century earlier the battle of Plassey in 1757 recorded a verdict of the exasperated Hindus of Bengal against the imbecile and tyrannical Muslim rule. The bulwark erected against it with the help of the English merchants ultimately recoiled on the originators, not quite unexpectedly. Things moved very rapidly after this event. Once for all it decided the supremacy of the English over the Dutch in India. Other European adventurers had by then disappeared from the scene. In its wake came the English East India Company's commercial exploitation and political misrule This paved the way for a rising known us the Indian Mutiny in 1857. Its declared purpose was restoration of the dead and rotten Muslim rule. Bengal refused to join this retrograde movement

Queen Victoria's proclamation in 1858 foisted a sense of relief into the country. Actual transfer of Indian Empire from Company to Crown in November that year did not involve any basic change. Indian Empire, like Canada, won at the smallest cost ever conceivable, remained to the English a profitable hunting ground.

And what a hunting ground it was ! Manchester was built on the ruins of Cassimbazar in Bengal. As R C. Dutt, a renowned Bengali Civilian had put it. "The English industry was born from the sacrifice of Indian industry."

However, that was only one side of the picture. They did not only take from India, they also gave something to the country.

Indian tea cured the English of their national vice of drunkenness in the eighteenth century Burdened with a deep sense of gratitude, they sent shiploads of wine in India. It resulted in a sudden influx of drunkenness in Bengal, in fact, all over India, in the nineteenth century. It was said that the English liquor merchants sent men throughout the country "for the express purpose of educating the natives to drink intovicating liquor."

Bengal's national character was at a low ebb when the European soldiers of fortune first arrived here. Such degradation was only normal. It was born of long subjection of the Hindus under a rotten and despotic Muslim rule. Sycophancy, hypocrisy, and treachery were the price the Hindus paid for their precarious living. They copied, with a sense of pride and prestige, from the Muslim book of purdah and multi-marriage. Lewdness was the order of the day. At this phase of what is known as Hindu mediaevalism, Ram Mohan Roy appeared in the scene. He died thirty years before the Swami was born.

Ram Mohan, who was born seventeen years after the battle of Plassey, came from a well-to-do family. His education began with Persian and Arabic which languages then carried more commercial value than Sanskrit. But he learnt Sanskrit later in the traditional way. Like other Hindu young men of his time, he imbibed both the spirit and form of Muslim culture as a matter of course. In the background of the gloomy Hindu mediaevalism it looked stupendous, but he was not dazed by its glow. In fact, Ram Mohan was the first spark of a conflict between the alien and native culture and religion.

What exactly was this Hindu mediaevalism ? Its principal symptoms were overall weakness and a profound sense of frustration. They pervaded the entire Hindu community. The Vedas and the Upanishads which have always been the community's perennial source of strength were completely forgotten. On the one hand, their study was forbidden to many by the priests and, on the other, their texts were misinterpreted by them. This they did partly out of ignorance and partly to suit their own selfish ends of establishing hold over the laity. It resulted in imbecility of thought, intellectual bankruptcy, moribund socio-religious doctrines and suicidal unworldliness. Ceremonialism reigned supreme and it was multiplied everyday. It was, in fact, a chaotic and a dark age.

Standing at the juncture of the Muslim decadence and British ascent, Ram Mohan fought against the Hindu mediaevalism. It was tenacious fight of a gigantic personality. If resistance to and, emergence from, this dark age that enveloped India can be called a Renaissance in miniature, Ram Mohan was its father. He threw his lot with the British. Because, in his infinite wisdom, he could see that friendship with the West was the only way out of his morass.

His revival programme covered social, religious and educational reforms. He had in him the essentials of mainly greatness. A great thinker and a greater executor, he faced all oppositions bravely. Although in all his social and educational reforms he invoked the assistance of the British ruling authorities, in matters of religion he kept away from them and also from the overpowering allurements which Christianity offered in those days.

Ram Mohan's greatness lies in his great fight against this galloping Hindu decadence. He selected his weapons from the armoury of the Vedas and the Upanishads as both Dayananda and Vivekananda did subsequently. But he led the way. In founding the "Brahmasabha" in 1828, five years before his death, he was neither influenced by the "Matazola" sect of Islam nor by the Unitary Church of Christianity. He had his firm belief in the Vedas and the Upanishads and he thought that, if he could reopen this perennial source of strength to his countrymen, they would be automatically re-vitalized. And, his vision in this direction was crystal clear.

Ram Mohan has been depicted inadequately as a mere fighter devoted to the task of removing idolatry from India. This has been done particularly by those writers who imgine and preach that idolatry in the cause of all evils in this country. The thought is either born of a design or a childish chain of reasoning. Ram Mohan had no doubt his schooling in the lessons of monism from Arabic and Persian literature as also from Sufism, but his main-stay was Vedanta. Personality, however, he was devoted to Tantrik cult, an off-shoot of Mahayana Buddhism later on adapted by Hindu community Ram Mohan, however, preached Vedanta and prescribed it for the dying community in which he was born. The cure advocated by Swamiji was no different, although personally he perhaps leaned towards his cult of devotion,

As Bertrand Russell has pointed out, Christianity is more tolerant than Islam It is a vigorous and proselytizing religion. Consequently the then moribund state of the Hindu-community offered a unique field for conversion. The opportunity was fully utilised by every soldier of Christ and by all means, fair and foul. Thete was little difference between the Britich method and that of the Portuguese which was known as "The Rice-pot and the Rupee Policy."

In fact, conversion of niggers to Christianity was an article of faith of all Europeans who visited India. To begin with the work was undertaken by the ignorant and cruel Portuguese headed by Vasco-da-Gama who arrived at the West coast on the eve of the Sixteenth century. Commenting on the position Sir Richard Temple wrote :

> "An unfortunately bigoted and far too powerful a priesthood led the Portuguese Church in India : but even amongst them there were such true missionaries at Francisco de Xavier.
> "Ignorance in regard to the Indians and their ways was at first complete—so complete that Vasco-da-Gama and his men at the beginning thought that the Hindu was a kind of a Christian !
> . . . .Conversion to the Portuguese form of Christianity of all the Indian population was a feasible proposition. . . ."

This mist of ignorance about the possibility of wholesale conversion was never lifted completely. All proselytizing Churches working in India vied with one another in their efforts to lead the heathens to the Kingdom of Heaven. The zeal was maintained partly by racial arrogance and partly by commercial investment on piety by the virtuous at home, particulary Americans.

This proselytizing zeal of the Christian Missionaries gave the alarm to the Hindus in slumber. In fact, it did a signal service by rousing them from a state of stupor. Ram Mohan was perhaps the first man in India to set about a silent but vigorous protest. It was followed by Devendranath Tagore, Swami Dayananda and Swami Vivekananda. Things were, however, different with Keshav Chandra Sen.

Many wise Europeans have since recognised the futility of attempts at conversion of the Hindus. A religion and a culture

which have survived many millenniums can hardly be conquered. Commenting on Ram Mohan Max Muller wrote :

> "But while they (Ram Mohan and men of his ilk) clearly perceived that their religion was behind the time, and, as a social institution, could not stand long against Christianity, they were by no means inclined to admit that from a philosophical point of view also it was inferior to Christianity."

But racial arrogance dies hard and the times were different. So missionary zeal for conversion continued unabated. It was actively supported by civilians, military men and even Governors General. Lord Dalhousie passed a law granting civil rights to religious converts. As a result, change of religion no longer involved loss of property to the converts.

The native English schools and colleges were recruiting ground and Christian teachers helped conversion. Vivian Derozio, an Anglo-Indian teacher of the Hindu College (1826-31) might have been a very prominent and vociferous member of his clan, but there were many others less noisy. In the name of rationalism, all of them preached free thinking within the four-walls of Christianity. The result was that young students in their teens considered it meritorious to break the old Hindu traditions and customs. They indulged in drinking wine and eating the prohibited meat openly in the city parks. The rude shock of the show spurred the thinkers of the community to some action in self-defence.

While skilled and subtle British salesmanship accounted for the rapid progress of intemperance in India, meat eating was boosted as a source of ready physical strength. While in his teens, Mahatma Gandhi, who was six years junior to Vivekananda, could not resist this argument. He took meat, against his religion, secretly for many months before giving it up as inefficacious.

These symptoms of unrest preluded conversion and also followed it. But the heat that caused these symptoms was generated by the force of conversion. Ram Mohan resisted and curbed this force which was shaking up the upper class of the society. Moreover, by reviving the Upanishads, he gave his countrymen an effective weapon to meet the challenge of the West in proclaiming Christianity as a superior religion. Ram Mohan

was not merely a patriot, but he was a saviour.

After his death in Bristol in 1833, his mentle felt on Devendranath Tagore, father of the great poet Rabindranath. It was not, however, an apostolic succession of faith for, when Ram Mohan died, Devendranath was merely a lad of sixteen years of age. But Ram Mohan was a friend of Devendranath's father and his influence on Devendranath was more paternal in nature. Personally Devendranath was given to meditation by nature. Steeped in Islamic tradition and culture from boyhood, he was faced with Christianity's open challenge subsequently. In the resultant conflict he followed the footsteps of Ram Mohan with an important difference in the basic approach. Given to free thinking or rationalism of the West, he moved to the field of electic philosophy Like Ram Mohan he, too, clung firmly to Hindu ideals based on the Upanishads. But, unlike him, he relied on his own personal interpretation of the scripture instead of its traditional meaning as given by the universally accepted great exponents This subjective individualism led him to compose his "Brahmodharma" which he declared to be inspired. But leaving this literary composition aside, creation of the "Adi Bramho Samaj", a new school of religious thought, developed from the nucleus of Ram Mohan's "Brahma Sabha", was his definite achievement. It met the challenge of the day. It gave strength and shelter to those of his countrymen who, in their ignorance, felt humiliated and ashamed by Christianity's blatant criticism of the so-called Hindu idolatry. It envisaged a new era.

But as his faith was conceived in self-preservation and, not in self-realization, it showed signs of ideological borrowings from both Islam and Christianity.

In full appreciation of the position, Romain Rolland wrote :

> "The faith of the Brahmo Samaj then is a faith in one God, who created the universe out of nothing, and who is characterised essentially by the spirit of Kindness, and whose absolute adoration is necessary for the salvation of man "in the next world."

This faith, however, runs counter to the Upanishadic doctrine to take its first part, although both Islam and Christianity held that the universe has been created out of nothing, the Upanishads

categorically declare that God is both the creator and the material of the universe.

Devendranath was more like a religious dignitary rather than a saint. He struck a balance between his pursuits of wealth and religion. He remained an outcaste for his unorthodox religious beliefs, but socially that did not matter much with him. For, as a wealthy person, he had to do little with common man. In fact, he catered for the socio-religious needs of only a section of the upper class of Hindu community and for considerable periods at times lived the life of a recluse in complete isolation.

Devendranath retired at the age of forty-five in 1863 but lived upto eighty-eight. On his retirement, his place was taken up by Keshavchandra when he was about twenty-four years old. Devendranath loved Keshavchandra dearly. Although Keshavchandra, too, was devoted to him yet he differed with him on a few vital points. Keshavchandra tried to bring common man into his fold. Moreover, in a spirit of piecemeal reformation, he bent his energies to removing social evils of Hindu community without touching their root causes.

Keshavchandra, however, become the idol of the youth of his age for his oratory, good looks, and noble character. As he did not move in olympian height like his prodecessor, he was easily accessible to the educated youngmen of the middle class. Gradually he moved away from Devendranath and, in fact, away from his basic ideals Christianity attracted him and his devotion to this faith increased by stages. Finally, imbibing a strong adoration for Jesus, he began to preach veiled Christianity. It was, therefore, only natural that he should be lionized by the British Government and be compared to Gladstone when he paid a brief visit to England. It was generally held by his close associates that if he had lived several years longer, he would have entered the Roman Church.

His ignorance of Sanskrit and also of the scriptures was well-matched. With no secured moorings for his faith, he was caught in the net of European rationalism and he soon became what was known as "the noble product of the education and the culture of West."

On the eve of Keshavchandra's departure to England in 1870, he and Swami Dayananda, the founder of the Arya Samaj, once met in Calcutta, Keshavchandra knew no Sanskrit and Swami

Dayanandra knew no English. Keshavchandra expressed his regret at Swamiji's ignorance of English tongue : for, otherwise the great vedic scholar would have been a very desirable companion on his visit to England. Keshavchandra's taunt was readily repaid in his own coin. The great vedic scholar said that he was equally sorry for the Indian orator of English tongue for his want of knowledge in his own sacred language, Sanskrit. He wondered how could he aspire to teach religion to Indian people through the medium of a foreign language !

In appreciation of Keshavchandra's near-Christian activities, Romain Rolland has declared that he was nearer and more appealing to the Europeans than any other Indian of repute. He has also taken the greatest pains, though unavailingly, to prove that Sree Ramakrishna's influence on his life, if any, was insignificant. The proselytizing spirit lives in every Christian mind and it is not much weakened by the refinement of his or her culture. For, while in the West culture is achieved by widening the surface of knowledge, that in the East it can only be acquired by means of a change in the mental planc in terms of depth. This is why even Max Muller's mind, culturally so high could not escape this proselytizing spirit. After meeting Keshavchandra in England he declared :

> "The history of these attempted Brahmo reforms has been so often written that I need not enter fully into it, beyond repeating my conviction that great opportunities were lost then for planting. Christianity on the old and fertile soil of India."

Although himself a great personality, Keshavchandra lost heavily for his leaning to Christianity. Whatever reputation survived was finally lost when it was found that his practice was at variance with his profession. This became manifestly clear in regard to his daughter's marriage. And, when he died in 1884, some two years before Sree Ramakrishna's passing away, "the number of his disciples was not in accordance with his desert."

Ram Mohan gave the correct lead for the revival of the dying Hindu community. He followed the tenets of the scriptures as explained by the saintly perceptors of old, but he did not discard the truth he gained by his personal perception. Initially both

Devendranath and Keshavchandra accepted the authority of the scriptures but they saw no need for the preceptors. They relied entirely on their own perception. In the case of Keshavchandra the perception was Christocentric, and in the case of Devendranath incomprehensive and superficial. Both religioners were the products of European rationalism, but they changed their earlier views towards the end of their lives. While neither Devendranath nor Keshavchandra could survive the test of time, Ram Mohan is still alive and will continue to live

The popularity of Keshavchandra attracted Swami Vivekananda, then known as Narendra Dutta, to his fold while he was quite a young boy. But more of it later on.

From its very early age, the Brahmo Samaj has been fighting the onslaught of Christianity on the Hindu community. In fact, it was born to fight it. But the picture of the fight will not be clear and complete without a mention of the Arya Samaj and the Theosophists. The main sphere of activity of these religious groups was, however, outside Bengal. The Theosophists predominated in South India, and the Arya Samajists mainly worked in the North and the West.

Dayananda Saraswati of Gujarat was seven years junior to Devendranath of Bengal. A great Sanskrit scholar and saint, he, too, was terribly perturbed by the increasing and easy conversion of the Hindus in all walks of life to Christianity in Northern and Western India. Like their compeers in Bengal, the educated Hindu youths in these areas, too, had little knowledge of and, respect for, their ancestral faith. They were, therefore, falling an easy prey to the onset of zealous Christian missionaries.

Swami Dayananda wanted to put the Hindu community on its feet and planned revolutionary changes in religious outlook. His object was to take the Hindu community back to the period when none of the eighteen Puranas, which then, as now, governed the popular Hindu beliefs and ritua's were in existence. With the elimination of the Puranas, he thought, Hinduism would shake off its caste-consciousness and idolatry. Moreover, the Vedas would be studied, "Homa" sacrifice would be performed and vedic monism would automatically be established.

His movement bordered on utopianism. But it had a strong inherent vigour in it. Like the Brahmo Samaj it continued to meet the challenge of the age since its birth in Bombay in 1875.

During the last six years of his life, which ended in 1883, Swami Dayananda swept over Rajputana, Gujarat, Punjab, Agra and Oudh. By his unrivalled knowledge of Sanskrit and the Vedas, his fifteen year's wanderings all over the country, his formidable energy and firm conviction, he proved himself to be a saviour of the dying Hindu community.

He was indeed a great rejuvenating force to reckon with. Posterity will remember with gratitude the crusade he led and his fight against the Christian invaders. This fact was readily acknowledged by Romain Rolland when he wrote :

> "Dayananda declared war on Christianity and his heavy massive sword cleft it asunder with scant reference to the scope or exactitude of his blows . . . . His slashing commentaries, reminiscent of Voltaire and his Dictionnaire Philosophique, have unfortunately remained the arsenal for the spiteful anti-Christianity of certain modern Hindus."

There is a great deal of similarity between the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj. Both grew out of conflict aimed at fighting the Christian onslaught Both worked for the revival of the Hindu community drawing sustenance from their ancient and forgotten scriptures, the Vedas But there was also a fundamental difference. While the Arya Samaj firmly believe in the infallibility of the Vedas and also in the doctrine of transmigration of soul, the Brahmo Samaj stands wavering and shaken in its belief.

Theosophy, on the other hand, did not grow in Indian soil. The name comes from the Greek word "Theosophia" or divine wisdom. It carries with it a certain connotation in European thought, and is more or less analogous to the sanskrit word "Brahmavidya " Madame Blavatsky, a Russian, founded the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875, the same year in which the Arya Samaj was born. It came into India about a year later and planted itself in the South.

The declared purpose of the Theosophical Society were, first, formation of a nucleus of universal brotherhood of man; second, study of comparative religion, philosophy and science; third, investigation into unexplained laws of nature and the powers latent in man.

The last purpose was perhaps the first in importance. It gave

rise to "secret doctrine" or occultism leading to the development of psychic force. The society found a very effective exponent in Mrs. Annie Besant, an English woman and a main disciple of Blavatsky, who spent all her life in India. Originally a devout Christian, Mrs. Besant turned an atheist when her ardent prayers to God failed to protect her only child from death. She was then attracted by the subtle occultism preached by Madame Blavatsky.

That she herself developed very great psychic powers was acknowledged on all hands. Even Count Keyserling, the towering German thinker and humanist, who made blatant sarcasms about Theosophy, met Mrs. Besant and acknowledged her achievements. He also added that the Theosophist leaders admitted freely that their occult powers were born of Indian yoga

But perhaps Mr. Besant could realize at an advanced age that she was moving on a psychic plane and not on a spiritual one. This is why the emphasis in the Theosophical world, under her guidance, was laid on vedantic Brahmavidya and the doctine of the Gita.

Both Lutheran and Catholic missionaries were actively carrying on brisk conversion in South India when the seed of Theosophy was planted there. Blavatsky's "secret doctrine" and occultism proved more attractive than Christianity and they stimulated the Hindu community to study their own sacred scriptures, the Gita and the Upanishads. The impact of Christianity on Hinduism did not produce as much internal conflict in the South as it did in other parts of India But this lacuna was corrected, knowingly or unknowingly, by Madame Blavatsky and Mrs Besant. It saved the South from prolific conversion which otherwise seemed inevitable. When this foreign element in the Indian religious body died a natural death, the void was readily filled by Swami Vivekananda's vedantic docrine as carried by the Ramakrishna Mission This is perhaps why the Order became instantly and immensely popular in the South. The Mission's edifice was built on the ruins of Theosophy.

Turning to Bengal, when Keshavchandra was moulding the form of Brahmo Samaj, other forces were also at work. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the great thinker and literateur of Bengal and the composer of "Bande Mataram," was born in 1838, the same year as Keshavchandra. Bengal perhaps has yet to see a

more ardent, versatile and vigorous leader of thought than Bankimchandra. Immensely erudite and patriotic, he swallowed in his early days the doctrines of European rationalism. But soon he adjusted his new acquisition with his deep knowledge of Indian scriptures and philosophy. Through his criticism, essays, satires, religious diseourses and novels he made an effective effort to restore self-confidence and poise to his countrymen who grew blind in the glare of all the gloss that came along with European civilization.

Bankimchandra breathed new life into the country. As he was very widely read by the educated people, the ideals he preached gained ground rapidly. Although a civil servant under an alien Government, he preached patriotic ideas fearlessly. His novel "Anand Math," published in 1882, was militant in character. As a piece of literary art its claim may not be very high, but as a source of inspiration it ranks foremost. The book at once caught the imagination of the educated youths of Bengal and its influence on Swami Vivekananda, who was only nineteen years old when it was published, was great. Mahendranath, a brother of the Swami, has pointed out that the Swami read Bankimchandra's works with avidity and the spirit of "Bande Mataram" has undoubtedly been a great force in shaping his early life. Even one year before his passing away, Swami advised the youths of Dacca these words :

> "Read Bankimchandra and Bankimchandra, and emulate his Desh-bhakti (patriotism) and Sanatan-dharma (duty of a son to his motherland— see 'Ananda Math."

Shri Ramakrishna was born two years earlier than Bankimchandra and Keshavchandra in an obscure village in Bengal. He came to Dakshineswar temple near Calcutta when he was twenty years old. But his fame as a great mystic and a saint did not travel far until after about ten years. Yet he was held in high esteem by a small group of devotees much earlier. It is at the residence of one of these devotees that Narendranath for the first time met Sree Ramakrishna in 1881 when he was about eighteen years old. His life after that meeting was gradually moulded by the great saint until he passed away in 1886. The period of probation, though comparatively short was very fruitful.

Although Sree Ramakrishna gave the Swami his final shape, the ground was prepared by two stalwarts, namely, Keshavchandra and Bankimchandra. In fact, if Brahmo Samaj was the guardian of morals, Bankimchandra was the thought-leader of concrete patriotism of all mid-nineteenth century youths of Bengel. The two forces converged in the Swami to strike's balance.

Swamiji was born in a family in which the moral fibre was strong. Perhaps asceticism and love of God ran in his blood. His grandfather left home at the age of twenty-five and became a sannyasin. Like the general run of educated men of his age, his father Biswanath held the Bible in one hand and the works of the Persian poets in the other and recited from both. However, his preference for the Persian poets, notably Hafiz, and also for Islamic culture was remarkable. The Gita and the Upanishads were practically unknown in Hindu homes of those days. The Swami's mother, Bhubaneswari, was however a devout Hindu, observing the rituals enjoined by the Puranas. She was also fond of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. While the father recited from Persian, the mother from the Indian epics, the son recited the "Bande Mataram," the song of the young Bengal patriots. It was the advent of a new age.

SIR, HAVE YOU SEEN GOD ?

Born and bred in a sober and dignified—middle-class family, Swami Vivekananda developed a natural immunity from the prevalent ills of the age. His physical beauty was superb. Stoutly built, he had an intellectual forehead, pearly white teeth, thick, wavy black hair, a pair of uncomparable eyes and a deep musical voice. His psysical charms could win any heart at a glance. *Writing about him Swami Gambhirananda says :*

> "He sang in a sweet baritone, and could play on various instruments with considerable skill. In athletics he outshone others, particularly in wrestling. In debate he was unchallengable . . . yet he was very simple in his habits, eareless about dress, warm in his friendship and unstinted in his charity."

Consequently, it was no wonder that he won the favours of

Keshavchandra at an early age, and soon found a place as a member of the chair in the Brahmo Samaj prayer hall. But singing devotional songs and hearing routine sermons did not satisfy his curiosity about God. He went about asking all men of God whosoever preached or talked of Him. "Sir, have you seen God ?" was the invariable query. Naturally enough, some of the persons he addressed felt shy and some surprised at this unusual question. Even Devendranath who was called "Maharshi" or the great sage, got immensely perplexed. He could only mutter a negative reply.

The only one person who gave a reply in the affimative to his question was Sree Ramakrishna. He said :

> "Yes, I have seen God. I see Him as I see you, only far more intensely. God can be seen. One can talk to him. But who cares for God ?"

Of course, the saint's reply did not carry conviction to the Swami at first. How could a man of reason believe in such fantastic claims ? So, Swamiji thought that it was nothing but self-delusion or hallucination of the mad man.

But the mad man had his special charms. He could not be brushed aside, inspite of his simplicity. Some men of high standing were gathering round him to watch him go into ecstasy and come back to consciousness. It was a sort of miracle. Principal Rev. Hastio of the General Assembly's Institution brought this miraculous power of Sree Ramakrishna to the notice of his students amongst whom was Swamiji, then known as Narendra Dutta.

At first the mad man of Dakshineswar was more found of Swamiji than he was of him. But gradually the table turned, and Swamiji got more and more attracted. This progressively increasing attraction reached its zenith when Swamiji was engulfed by adversity on the sudden death of his father in 1884. He was then preparing for his degree examination, and his prodigal father left little for the family to fall back upon.

The destitute but sizable family eked out its existence with the help of Swamiji's maternal grandmother. The Swami meantime graduated, took a year in Law and then gradually strayed from the family into the fold of his Master, who made him his slave by love.

How the Master moulded his life is a matter which we must leave the readers to guess. The result was that one was seen wrapped up fully in another, and Swamiji took the usual Sannyasin's vow of not touching women and gold. Then began his "Tapasya" or penance for his self-realization. Alongwith him were a few other co-disciples, all almost his own age.

Of the two great forces that shaped his boyhood and youth, namely, patriotism and love of God, the second got the better of the first under the Master's influence. He then dreamt of God, and not of his country. And there is no doubt that he got the taste of what is mystically called Bliss or "Wirbikalpa Samadhi," an esoteric experience that changes the human mental plane altogether.

But his Master knew how Swamiji would blossom out into his fullness. He knew that he would grow to be a great banyan tree giving shelter to thousands of tired souls. He could not remain a selfish mendicant looking only for his own personal salvation. The Master said :

> "You will do great things in the world; you will bring spiritual consciousness to men, and assuage the misery of the humble and the poor."

He stressed on the Upanishadic truth that "God is manifested in everything" by uttering in a state of superconsciousness that "Jiva is Shiva" (All living beings are Gods). He also cautioned that "Religion is not for empty bellies."

The seeds of these truths and sayings were sown in the fertile soil of Vivekananda's subconscious field. In course of time, they germinated, and grew up under favourable conditions as sturdy plants.

The Master passed away in 1886, leaving behind him a handful of disciples to take care of themselves. Amongst them were a few callow young men, mostly students in their teens, who had left home with an ardent desire to become men of God. The Swami headed the group. But there were also a few householders, men of the world, yet devoted to the master. When these young aspirants refused to go back home after the Master passed away, a couple of wealthy householders offered to support them in order to keep the flag of Sreẹ Ṛaṃakrishṇa flying. So these young

mendicants were housed in a dilapitated house in Baranagore suburbs of Calcutta. By common consent, Vivekananda led this band of young monks at the sanctuary where they devoted themselves to meditation, study and spiritual exercise.

The Swami was already familiar with the outlines of European philosophy. He now devoted himself assidously to the study of its Indian counterpart. But soon this inactive and scheduled course of life began to hang heavy on hin. He thought that unless he made himself familiar with the thought-currents of the modern world, he would merely stagnate and end in perversity. He could never reconcile to the age-old idea of a monk's goal of earning personal, salvation only. It appeared to him to be a narrow ideal and he thought that he must break though this narrowness. His brother-disciples, however, did not subscribe to the same views, atleast readily.

To get out of this rut, he made some journeys in 1888 and 1890, either alone or with a companion, to Northern India. The world outside opened a new vista, but mysticism again got the better of his rationality when he was at Gazipur in the Uttar Pradesh in 1889. Paohari Baba, a mystic saint who reportely lived on air only, was about to absorb him completely. He narrowly escaped the calamity of giving up his loyalty to Sree Ramakrishna by, as the story has it, repeated visions he had ot the saint. In plain language, his devotion to Sree Ramakrishna eventually survived his temporary weakness for mysticism, verging on apostasy.

Swamiji's restlessness, however, grew with days and he was not at peace in their Baranagore camp which, in fact, was he first Ramakrishna Math or monastery in this country. Finally, in 1891 he left this monastery alone to continue his wander-years or pilgrimage.

Some four hundred years ago, Bengal produced a greater wandering mendicant in the person of Sree Chaitanya. He covered on foot almost the whole of South. India and a large territory in the North. The journey occupied him for about six years when he preached his message of love and universal brotherhood. His message inspired the downtrodden with a sense of dignity at a time when corrupt Muslim rule was sapping the vitality of the Hindu community specially in the Eastern region.

Four hundred years later, Swami Vivekananda walked over

the same territory as Sree Chaitanya did on a different purpose. Swamiji was inherently a monk in action and not a monk in meditation. Mysticism claimed him for a time, but as soon as he recovered from its spell, his instinctive-patriotism grew stronger. He wanted to see every inch of his motherland; he wanted to examine the condition in which his poor countrymen lived; he wanted to find out to what extent the soul of the country revolted against her utter subjection and degradation.

He had known the English in Bengal and had a taste of the civilization they had brought in. He knew how London grew rapidly at the cost of Cassimbazar, and why the graduates, even in his days, were finding it difficult to get suitable employment. He also watched, with a sense of distress and humiliation, the inroads made by the Christian missionaries by means of their unfair methods of conversion.

What did he think of the Englishman's efforts to civilize India ? He said that in trying to civilize India, the English used three 'B's, namely, Bible, Brandy and Bayonet. The apparent result of these efforts was an increasingly crushing poverty and a greater moral degradation of the country.

With 'Jivi' in utter misery, how could the monk in action rest in peace ? He had to find out a way to relieve their wretched state. So restive and desolate, the patriot monk set out on a study tour. That was the first step he took.

There is a vast similarity between Sree Chaitanya and Swami Vivekananda. Both were young mendicants, about twenty-five years of age, when they set out to traverse a large tract of India on foot. They followed almost the same route, one doing it in the reverse order Both had the greatest compassion for the downtrodden, the scum of the society, and both strove hard to put them on their feet. Indignant with the misrule of the alien Government, both offered resistence to the evil forces. Both were emphatic on the point that it was not only the monks who could earn salvation, but house-holders, too, stand on equal chance. Sree Chaitanya preached that "Human being is the highest epitome of God" and Swami Vivekananda taught that "Jiva is Shiva". Essentially, their messages are identical.

The study tour of the Swami occupied him for about two and a half years at the end of which he set sail for America on May

31, 1893. During the wander-years, he devoted almost one year to the studies of the Vedas under Pandit Sankar Pandurang, a great Vedic scholar in Pore Bunder in Western India. Here his wide knowledge in Sanskrit grammar, acquired earlier at Jaypore, stood him in good stead. Pandit Pandurang was charmed with the talents of his young student and said that India needed persons of the Swami's calibre to interpret Hindu culture and religion in foreign lands. Possibly he had heard about the Parliament of Religion which was to sit in Chicago. To his student, however, the suggestion meant little or nothing until such time as he met the Maharaja of Ramnad (Madras) in early 1893.

The resolute Swami continued his march. Travelling alone as a mendicant and, living entirely on charity, he met people of all grades, high and low, rich and poor. He stopped with the poor, lived at times even with the family of sweepers, and shared the privations and indignities of the downtrodden and the oppressed classes. He found that the bulk of the Hindu community was submerged in ignorance, jealousy, poverty and the other evils they carry with them. He was greatly distressed. But he noticed, with a sense of relief, that although poverty had drained his countrymen ruthlessly, glimmering signs of a great spiritual heritage in them was unmistakable. The spiritual treasure of the community was not wholly destroyed and its soul survived beneath the wreckage.

He realized how shallow the Westernized reformers were ! All their talks of reformation were superficial showy rot. Also, how impudent were our own countrymen who wanted to bring in social, religious and political reforms without looking for the soul of the country. How much do they know of the lowly people who form the bulk of the society ? They see them through their coloured glasses; they merely profess a lip-deep sympathy with them in order to serve their own ends.

They were "the empty bellies" and, Sree Ramakrishna had said, religion was not for them. No ideas or ideals, either spiritual, intellectual or moral, can grow in the barren field of poverty. Abject poverty eats up the vitality of the community and reduces it to a state of stupor. It is as much true of an individual as of a community.

Foreign critics have always been loud to proclaim from house tops that religion is the cause of India's downfall and decay. Their

under lings here have also sung the same tune. It was the Swamiji who first declared emphatically that poverty was at the root of all these ailments. And this was not a statistical deduction but a realization born of his assiduous study-tour. But he was no politician, indulging in jugglery of words to serve his own end. He hated politics and wrote to his devotee Alasinga in Madras from Paris in September, 1895 :

> "I hate cowardice; I will have nothing to do with cowards or political nonsense. I do not believe in any politics. God and Truth are the only politics in the world, everything else is trash.

His heart was human and not political. It bled for the down-trodden, the afflicted, the poor. It bled profusely. They were the victims of grinding poverty which was caused by rule of barbarity, both alien and native. To his disciples he often lamented :

> "Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of Gods and of sages have become next door neighbours to brutes ?"

Humanism or patriotism whatever it may be called, it was not conceived politically. Its source was spiritual. It came from the spirit of service to man, the epitome of God.

His spirituality thus appears to have melted into patriotism and it has given his action a positive direction. This, in fact, is unique No Indian saint had the same distinction and such a wide vision. He heralded a new era and laid the foundation of new India. "India to him was the air he breathed", said Sister Nivedita and she added : "There was one thing, however, deep in the Master's nature, that he himself never knew how to adjust. This was the love of his country and his resentment of her suffering."

Though his thoughts and vision were wide enough to cover the universe, he did not lose himself, in the wilderness of inter-nationalism. Very correctly, he began his charity at home. His countrymen were his immediate charge. His neighbours must receive his first consideration.

But the problem was how to remove this appaling poverty. The problem was how to bring about a radical change in the

moribund community around him. The problem was how to make Hinduism as aggressive as Christianity and Islam to resist disgraceful and degrading conversion. He had no faith in the declared mission of the alien Government. The British did not conquer India for any humanitarian purpose. They naturally wanted to reap the full benefit of their conquest It would suit their purpose to keep the inhabitants poor, uneducated and fighting amongst themselves as long as they could.

But there were some Hindu Maharajas in the country who together ruled over about a fifth of the land. The British did not normally interfere with their internal administration. Could something be done through these satraps ? At one time the Swami thought that revival of India should begin at that end. Social reforms, liberal education, and physical training on the proper lines would create a band of formidable soldiers in those semi-independent territories. These soldiers would in course of time work for British India's revival.

It is said that, like many other fiery patriots, the Swami, too, cherished the idea of an armed revolution to get rid of the foreign rule. But for this purpose, he was not at all in favour of getting any foreign help. He is reported to have contacted even a reputed gunmaker for ammunition. All this may or may not be entirely correct, but visions of armed revolution in young Bengal even in Swami Vivekananda's days was nothing uncommon. But his study-tour must have taught him that the country as a whole was then as dead a mutton. There was not the slightest spark of life anywhere to support a revolution of that nature What was lacking ? Strength—physical and moral both of course !

Events moved very quickly. While he was training in his mind the great problems of India and her revival, some of his admirers arranged of rush him to America with a vague idea of presenting him as an ambassador of Hindu culture and religion in the Parliament of Religion. He, too, saw the hands of God behind the move. Madras took a leading part in the matter and was ably supported by Rajasthan. The two Maharajas who took the initiative were those of Ramnad and Khetri.

Apart from these two Maharajas' personal regard for the Swami, national awakening too so small part in the matter. To Indians of those says, anything European, specially of British origin, carried the hallmark of advancemnt. Not to speak of

material and intellectual worlds, his sense of inferiority invaded even the spirital territory. In their colossal ignorance, even he so-called educated class regarded Christianity of the highest form of human religious conception. Even the disciples of Sree Rama-Krishna had not escape this complex. Some proclaimed that, like Keshavchandra, Swami Vivekananda had a passionate regard for Christ and that Swami Ramakrishnananda and Swami Saradananda, the two noted disciples of Sree Ramakrishna had been direct disciples of Christ in a former life ? Whatever may be said of others, the Swami had no such complex in his rational mind. This is revealed in his following utterances.

> "Jesus fell short, because he always did not lived upto his own highest ideal; and above all, because he did not give woman an equal place with man. Woman did everything for him, yet no one was made an apostle. This was doubtless owing to his Semitic origin."

However, both the orthodox and the progressive sections of the Hindu community strongly resented this most unwelcome inroad of Christianity. They found in the young Swami an able exponent of the modern thought and the nascent awakening of the community arising out of the conflict was a propelling force behind the scene.

Why did the Swami agree to go to America is of course a different matter, but he seemed to have agreed readily. But before he went abroad, he had satisfied himself on the query with which he began his spiritual life, namely, "Sir, have you seen God ?" He saw his God very vividly and proclaimed :

> "May I be born and reborn and suffer a thousand miseries, if only I may worship the only God in whom I believe, the sum total of all souls, and, above all, my God the wicked, my God the afflicted, my God the poor of all races."

THE SALVATION OF THE POOR OF INDIA

Why did the Swami go to America is a natural question that crosses everyone's mind. It appears to have no simple answer. Like P.C. Mazumdar representing the Brahma Samaja, Dharmapala

representing the Buddhists, Muni Atmaramji representing the Jainas, he did not go there as a regular delegate to represent Hinduism in the Parliament of Religion. In fact, neither did he carry any letter of authority or introduction from any religious body in India nor were even the dates and programme of the sittings of the Parliament known to the people who sponsored him. He appears to have jumped, without much planning, into a boat in which a first class berth was reserved for him and set sail for a journey the purpose of which was not very clearly defined.

Most biographers have quoted the Swami's own assertion to his two brother-disciples at Abu Road railway station to explain the purpose of his visit to America. It runs thus :

> "I have now travelled all over India . . . . But alas, it was agony to me, my brothers, to see with my own eyes the terrible poverty and misery of the masses, and I could not restrain my tears ! It is now my firm conviction that it is futile to preach religion amongst them without first trying to remove their poverty and sufferings. It is for this reason—to find more means for the salvation of the poor of India—that I am now going to America "

Herein is echoed the great saying of Sree Ramakrishna that "Religion is not for empty bellies; herein is resounded Swamiji's philosophy that spiritual salvation of India is inseparably connected with the removal of her abject poverty. But how was he to procure the sinews of his war against poverty from America ?

The absence of any reference to the Parliament of Religion in the above utterance is significant. To represent Hinduism in that assembly was perhaps not his objective, certainly not a primary one. It circumstantially developed to be a vital factor in his enterprise in America. It made him famous overnight.

Although Chicago was his immediate destination, and a formal representation at the world religious conference his apparent purpose, he never thought of returning to his homeland as soon as the assembly was over. Circumstances, of course, helped his stay in America but his determination to search the world for a remedy of his country's evils ran through his blood.

Writing to Haripada Mitra, one of his disciples, in December 1893 from Chicago, the Swami said :

> "I came to this country not to satisfy my curiosity, nor for name or fame, but to see if I could find any means for the support of the poor in India. If God helps me, you will know—gradually what those means are."

To Swami Ramakrishnananda he explained his mind a little more explicitly in his letter written from the same place on 19th March 1894. He wrote :

> "We as a nation have lost our individuality and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and 'raise the masses.' The Hindu; the Mahomodan; the Christian, all have trampled them under foot. Again the force to raise them must come from inside, i e., from orthodox Hindus
>
> "To effect this, the first thing we need is men and then the next is funds. Through the grace of our Guru, I was "sure to get ten to fifteen men in every town I next travelled in search of funds, but do you think the people of India were going to spend money ? . . . . I have come to America to earn money myself and then return to my country and devote the rest of my days to the realization of this one aim of my life."

This aim has been further explained in his letter of 20th June 1894 to Dewanji Shahib in which he said that his aim in crossing over to America was to collect—at least a little money to set in motion the wheel of his proposed organisation devoted to the cause of rejuvinating India His mission, he explained, was to spread education among the masses which alone would put them on their feet. This would be done through a band of young men who were forming themselves into a group with Sree Ramakrishna at their centre. He added :

> "Let these men go from village village to bringing not only religion to the door of everyone but also education. So I have a nucleus of organising the widows also as instructors to our women."

So, judging from what he wrote, even after he had fairly settled down in America, the main object of his visit was undoubtedly to get some money to carry out his noble mission in India on his return.

But of all foreign countries why did he choose America for this purpose ?

As is well known, the Swami was a very good student of history. He possibly looked at the world map, and made a complete mental survey of conditions then prevailing in each of the principal countries of the East and the West.

A resume of his survey may perhaps explain his choice.

In the East, both China and Japan were the scenes of persistent European intrusion during the Nineteenth century. Among the various European nations, namely, the Portuguese, the Spaniards, the Dutch and the English, who fastened like leaches on Southern China shores, the English were the most tenacious. The successive failures of the trade missions did not damp their zeal. They were cunning, too. Like wine in India, they found out a ready market for Indian opium in China and the import of this drug quadrupled within fifteen years. Prohibition introduced by the Chinese Government proved useless and the corrupt Chinese officials actively helped the English in smuggling the soporific drug. Strong steps were taken by the Chinese Government and the captured prohibited goods were burnt. The result was the repetition of what happened everywhere. The Queen of England sent out British navy to protect the traders; and poor China failed to resist the British onslaught. China thus lost the so-called "Opium War." She was for the first time forced to make a treaty with a Western power in 1842, and was unable to prevent this pernicious drug traffic. It was nothing short of a national calamity.

But that was only the beginning of China's misfortune. The signal of the open door was not missed by other greedy power and America, France, Norway, Sweden, and even Belgium forced their way. Russia and Japan joined the party later. More and more pressure was brought to bear on helpless China, and more and more concessions were obtained from her About the end of the century, China lost almost her own self. She lost control over her external trade and tariffs. She lost her hold on her internal organisations and finances. Even her trans-country railways were

financed and run by foreigners She was practically deprived of her sovereignty, and she continued her precarious existence at the mercy of a greedy gang of Eastern and Western powers.

Japan, like China, lived in seclusion inspite of a few Western leeches sticking to her shores until about mid-nineteenth century when America suddenly demanded opening of some of her ports to American ships. The demand followed the usual pattern of a tactical fight between a bully and a weakling What the "Opium War" was to China, America's demand for friendship was to Japan. Japan had to yield to an "Unequal treaty" and her doors were forced open not only for America but also for all enterprisers of the West.

But Japan felt and, rightly so, that unless she makes herself strong, she would have to meet China's fate. She thought that the only way to do it was to introduce in the country Western ideas of reconstruction. So Japan "began to run after Western ideas as fast as she could." In fact, she made a complete "volte-face." Old feudal system was discarded Administration was set up on French pattern, army on German principle, and navy on British model. European industrial practices were introduced and encouraged. The result was that in the course of a short period of twenty years, Japan was entirely a changed nation.

Her first show of strength was with China By gaining an overwhelming victory over her, Japan proved to the Western powers before the end of the century that "Yellow Peril" was seriously to be reckoned with. This show of military prowess enabled her to revise her "unequal treaties" with the Western powers. It enabled her to retain her integrity. It saved her from falling to pieces. But the military success lured her from ambition to ambition. In her outlook she was thoroughly Westernized; first by English Utilitarians, second by French democratic writers and third by German nationalistic influence. She had, by the end of the century, hardly anything Asiatic left in her.

In other words, the Swami could not think of getting any relief either from China or Japan. Did he then turn his mind of Russia and the African countries ?

During the earlier part of the nineteenth century, Russia practised strict isolation. A "stringent intellectual quarantine" was imposed to prevent infection by liberal ideas across the Western frontiers. The University education was controlled,

progressive political ideas were discouraged, and influence of international liberalism was guarded against. In habits and thoughts the nation was guided through the narrow channel of nationalism.

Then about the mid-century fresh air began to blow over country. The greatest canker of the nation, the abominable serfdom, was abolished. It freed nearly forty-five million serfs, representing about half the population. These landless slaves, with no means of livelihood, were given lands from the estates of their former landlords under a special arrangement. The seed of democracy for the first time thus germinated in Russian soil.

About the end of the century, the mental horizon of the Russian intelligentsia was overcast with the philosophy of Nihilism. This movement grew in the Universities as a purely academic exercise, but it ended in terrorism. The movement called in question "The autocracy of the Tsar, the authority of the State, the sanctity and truth of the Church and the obligations of the society." According to its philosophy, a shoe-maker's contribution to the world was greater than that of Shakespeare or Goethe, for shoes were more needed than poetry. Nihilists wanted to free the human society of all obligations and control and leave it to the natural forces of evolution. They wanted to replace religion by exact sciences and family life by free love.

In other words, the intellectual and religious worlds of the Russians at the end of the century were in great turmoil.

Although Africa, the dark continent, is so near Europe, yet the bulk of it was unknown to the Europeans until late nineteenth century. The treasures of Africa were thrown open to the European gaze by the numerous fortune hunters and missionaries. Among them Stanley was supreme and his books, namely, "How I found Livingstone" (1872), "Through the Dark Continent" (1878), "In Darkest Africa" (1890) whetted the appetite of greedy Europe.

The dinner gong was rung by the Belgians. Congo was the first fare consecrated and consumed in the holy name of exploration and civilization.

The French and the Portuguese arrived at the dinner hall followed by the Italians, the Germans, the Spaniards, and the Englishmen. The ravenous vultures' feast proceeded with great eclat. Each one justified others' demands and rights. It was a

mutual justification society of plunderers and usurpers. The fare, however, was adequate to satisfy everyone's appetite. So, surprisingly enough, the feast proceeded without much squabble or fight.

The dark continent was thus explored and amicably partitioned among the various races of Europe. The white mans' burden was considerably increased Africa's national wealth and potentialities eluded the children of the soil. The British got the lion's share. After the First World War in 1918, she held a belt of continuous territory from Cairo to the Cape !

So the Swami could not think of getting any succour for India either from Russia or from the Dark Continent. He must have then turned his attention to old Europe.

The history of Germany in the nineteenth century is the history of Bismarck, the greatest man that age produced. It was he who created the German Empire, a militarist federal empire in which Prussianism ruled supreme. The Prussian King became the Federal President, and Bismarck, the Prussian Minister, became the Federal Chancellor

Bismarck considered Germany as a "satiated" country. So he devoted himself to the cultivation of internal peace and development. But his period was not at all free from internal strife. His tough fights with the Roman Catholic and the Social Democrats gave him little respite at home. He started by expelling the Jesuits from Germany and controlling priesthood through the Government, but ultimately he lost the battle which was more political than ecclesiastic.

But even omnipotent Bismarck had to retire. He was forced to do so as a result of his disagreement with the young Kaiser. Ambitious Kaiser did not agree that Germany was a "Satiated" country. He felt that she was capable of infinite expansion and that she must take a high place in world-politics

About the dead end of the century, Germany started scrambling for overseas colonies like England and France. To protect the colonies she had to re-inforce the navy England viewed this step with great suspicion France was a common enemy of both England and Germany. But as a result of this suspicion, England gradually came closer to France and finally made friends with her Kaiser's policy of expansion sowed the seed of the First World War which started in 1914.

The end of the nineteenth century saw the growth of industrialism in Europe. It also saw the inception of the working-class movement, very largely based on the preachings of Karl Marx, a notable personality of the age. It saw the growth of militant nationalism, and inaugurated the movement for the emancipation of women.

The whole of old Europe was full of aggressive nationalism, although, on the face of it, there was a show of international understanding. Mammon was universally worshipped, and religion became the other name for good social order. Military competition turned Europe into armed camps of fighting races. Conscription was first introduced in France, followed by Germany. England continued to watch the developments with apprehension. Therefore, the question of getting any relief for the poor in India from old Europe did not arise at all.

America had, however, somewhat different tale to tell.

Until about the beginning of the twentieth century, America lived in seclusion. She made her influence felt internationally only during the First World War.

The whole of the nineteenth century was a period of internal reconstruction for her. She kept her aloofness partly by choice, but largely because she was far away from the arena of world activity. This isolation enabled her to develope herself so rapidly and powerfully within such a short period.

Americans represent a conglomeration of heterogenous migrants from various countries of Europe. The first to arrive were the Pilgrim Fathers who reached Plymouth in December, 1620 in the famous ship "Mayflower," and founded a settlement there. Streams of immigrants followed and, to begin with, the majority of them came from Germany, Great Britain and Ireland. This heterogenous colony served its connection completely with the mainland of Europe. Beginning on a clean slate, this peculiar collection of men and women developed a strong sense of unity among themselves. About mid-nineteenth century, greater number of further immigrants came from Russia, Poland, Italy, Austria, and South-Eastern Europe. These arrivals necessitated continual trritorial expansion to the West and, during the period between 1844 and 1848 the United States of America nearly doubled her territorial area.

This New World accommodated nearly forty million

immigrants of diverse nationality during the nineteenth century. The diversity of the people as apparent. Moreover, they were the discontended sections of all nations. Without a common condition, culture and law and, with their religious beliefs and philosophy of life widely divergent, they are in perpetual conflict not only with their new environment but also with their fellow settlers, this continual fight gave them a rich fund of totality, resourcefulness and individualism which they could never inherit from their old and discarded nationhood.

But how such differing elements were forged to a single whole entity is a miracle. It is a great political, social and economic experiment President Monroe's famous doctrine enunciated the first quarter of the nineteenth century, mounted to "Hands off America" and it roused national consciousness. And this new spirit found expression in literature, law and philanthropy. The new age was ushered by Emerson, Poe Whittier, Longfellow, Whitman and others.

Upto 1880, America was mainly an agricultural country. But soon after she changed her complexion and became largely industrial. Fortunately she was economically self-sufficient, except for a few commodities. So she could well protect her industries by raising adequate tariff all. Her industrial development was thus rapid and spectacular.

Taking stock of the world situation at the end of the nineteenth century, Swamiji could not have selected a more suitable country than America or gaining some help for the poor of India. The vagaries of racial prejudice and the canker of slave baiting as prevalent in America did not make much noise in the outside world Even where it did, "Uncle Tom's Cabin" which was published in America in 1852, perhaps assured the doubting minds that the country was full of the milk of human kindness.

But it might have been as well that Swamiji's American visit was really accidental and not of his own choice. But one thing seems pretty clear. This indignities suffered at the hands of the supercilious European missionaries became too heavy for a section of the Indians. Due to political subjugation it found little expression in the country. As soon as an opportunity showed itself, the indignant section of Indians wanted to prove to the West the glory of their faith. Good reception of Keshavchandra in England perhaps also increased national pride and confidence. But

Keshavchandra was the Evangelist of now thought in the East and not an interpreter of orthodox Indian religion and philosophy. In Swami Vivekananda the indignant section saw the picture of a grown Hindu. So it took the ready opportunity to send him to the platform of the world religious Congress.

But whatever ideas might have worked behind the scene. Swamiji was determined to devote himself not so much to carrying on religious work in America as in exposing the evils of grinding. Indian poverty aggravated by British colonisation. His mind was awfully bitter about the English which he confessed in no uncertain terms. "No one," he said, "entered England with so much hatred for the English as I did " Perhaps he thought that the Americans, who had then emancipated themselves from the same British yoke, would profoundly sympathize with the unfortunate Indians.

Swamiji was a good debater and orator from his early youth. In exposing the British misdeeds, he relied mostly on his own gift of the gab. His oratory and debating capacity were of such high order that Surendranath Banerjee, the renowned orator and politician of Bengal, saw in him. "The greatest public speaker India had ever known " Moreover Keshavchandra's success on the platform in England gave him further confidence.

ONWARD AND FORWARD

The above slogan, used freely by the 'cyclonic' or 'dynamic' Hindu monk, as the Swami was known in America, is as old as the Vedas. It denotes courage. pluck, and action. And the Swami was unbelievably active, plucky and bold.

The Swami, a youngman of barely thirty years of age, arrived in Chicago via Vancouver in July 1893. The Parliament of Religion was scheduled to sit on 11th September. He had no friends in that most expensive land which was completely new to him He had no money either. Moreover, he carried no credentials as a delegate to the Parliament, and his dress and colour stood against his reception either into a hospitable home or into a hotel. Even one such perplexing hurdle would have caused many to stumble, but all of them put together could not stop the Swami. The cyclone made its way, the dynamic shattered all obstacles.

But that was not all. He had to clear off many other solid blocks which grew more and more stubborn with an increase in his American fame. Firstly, the American missionaries who lived on the far squeezed out of the conversion machinery of Indian heathens gradually developed an obdurate enmity against him. He treaded on their vested interest. For, conversion had its commercial side; the religious embassies in India were terribly expensive organisations. For every heathen converted, the cost worked upto as much as 25 to 30 thousand dollars. This estimate of some Church Authorities in America may be on the high side. But, here is no doubt that American missionary work in India provided luxurious living for the soldiers of Christ and their families.

Not only was the Swami a living contradiction of what these missionaries preached in America about Indian heathens, but in his lectures he met their set catalogue of challenges boldly and squarely. The pictures they drew of the Indians had three prominent features. First, they said that it was a prevalent custom in India to throw children into the jaws of crocodiles. Second, Indians killed themselves beneath the wheels of the "Jagarnath's Chariot." Third, they burn their widows along with the dead bodies of their deceased husbands.

Dozens of books narrating these features among others and, illustrated with appropriate sketches, were published. Able versifiers were also at work. The more lurid these descriptions were, the more was their attraction Some of these books sold like hot cakes. One such book was entitled "India and its Inhabitants" written by a Mr. Caleb Wright, obviously an Indian returned expert This illustrated book was published in 1858 in 353 pages. It ran into seven editions in two years and as many as 36,000 copies were sold.

India also had the honour of being included in the nursery rhymes of the land. One such well-circulated treaties, written by a missionary in India, was entitled "Songs For The Little Ones At Home." In its pages the usual crocodile feature found both poetic and missionary expression in the following manner :

"See that heathen mother stand
Where the sacred current flows;
With her own maternal hand

Mid the waves the babe she throws.
"Hark ! I hear the piteous scream;
Frightful monsters seize their prey,
Or the dark and bloodly stream
Bears the struggling child away
Fainter now and fainter still,
Breaks the cry upon the ear;
But the mother's heart is steel,
She unmoved that cry can hear.
Send, oh send the Bible there,
Let its precepts reach the heart;
She may then her children spare—
Act the tender mother's part."

The fervent appeal for sending the Bible to India was also backed by other arguments. Are not the womenfolk there caged like parrots ? Are not numerous children hung up on trees in basket to be eaten up by birds ? Is not this barbarous land full of fearful Bengal tigers, pow-wowing, cunning priests, jewel-bedecked dancing girls and voluptuous native princes ?

Thanks to the misdoings of these missionaries, such calumnies against India were so wide-spread that at every meeting the Swami was challenged with a few of these stock charges. But he met them so easily and convincingly, and he gave such a brilliant exposition of Hindu religion and culture that the missionaries in India grew alarmed. Along with their friends at home they tried to hold out their Bastille as long as they could, playing all sorts of offensive games. But all their dodges proved useless. The Swami successfully bearded the lion in his den. His magnetic personality knew to defeat.

Some Theosophists were his second opponents. Although Theosophy was of American origin, it stuck its roots mainly in South India at the fag end of the nineteenth century under the able guidance of Annie Besant. The Swami's respect for Annie Besant was genuine. He thought and preached that every Hindu should be grateful for what she had done for the community. She turned the tide of conversion. She made the Hindus look upon their past wherein lay their perennial source of strength. But that was how Theosophy ended its days in India and not how it began. It was a different tale with Madame Blavatsky and Col.

Olcott at its helm.

Before leaving for America, the Swami requested a general letter of introduction from Col Olcott to his friends at home. He promised one readily on condition that the Swami should join their association. Naturally he could not comply with this request and this refusal caused great annoyance to these Theosophists. In fact, they were so enraged that, when reports of Swami's utter penury, immediately on his arrivla in America, reached Madras, an important member of the Order wrote to his American friend. ' The scoundrel will die soon; we are saved by the grace of God."

This, however, was a passive wish. It was followed up by active antagonism in America after the Swami gained great popularity at the end of the Parliamentary session. The Theosophists, though numerically very small in America, joined forces with the Christian missionaries. They had a third and a vigorous ally in another important person who was driven by pure jealously to the most deplorable course of action.

He was an associate of the Swami in India. He visited America once before could. He was fairly known to some people. He therefore persuade, with some amount of success, certain sections of the Americans believe that the Swami was not backed by any religions groups in India. Consequently he had no locus standi; in fact, he was an imposter.

But his vilification did not stop there. Coming back from abroad be circulated in India that in America the Swami was living in luxury and sin, throwing to the winds all vows he had taken as a monk.

The Swami carried no credentials from India. Therefore, those who wanted to vilify him, exploited this lacuna fully. The Swami appealed his friends in India for help but apparently they did not realize his difficulties. So nothing arrived before full one year had passed. During this intervening period, the unscrupulous trinity particularly the Swami's own countryman and personal friend, tried to do as much harm as he could. The trinity tried to oppose him stubbornly at every stop and, in fact, everywhere the Swami laid his feet. The battle was a bitter single-handed fight of a lone monk. The monk, however, ultimately won and his victory led India to glory.

Romabai Saraswati, the famous champion of Indian womanhood, had left America in 1888, some five years before the Swami

arrived there. An able daughter of Mother India and, an erudite Sanskrit scholar, Romabai made a volte-face after her conversion to Christianity in England and acceptance of a professionship in Cheltenham College. She gradually identified herself with the Christian missionaries of the nineteenth century in drawing a painful picture of her sisters in India.

"The High-Caste Hindu Woman" written in 1887 was a specimen of her line of thought and feelings. The book is divided into three main chapters, Childhood, Youth or Married life, and Widowhood or old age. In each of these chapters are narrated ghastly tales of woe of Indian women, atonce emotional and embarassing Stories of desertion of wives by husbands if they fail to give birth to male child, female infanticide, forced burning of widows, inhuman ill-treatment of various types of parents, husbands, and relations fill from cover to cover. The law-giver Manu is quoted as an authority in support of these nefarious customs and ill-treatment. And it became a tragic irony when this erudite Sanskrit scholar asserted : "I can say honestly and truthfully that I have never read any sacred book in Sanskrit literature without meeting this kind of hateful sentiment about women, namely, 'Woman is as impure as falsehood herself !'

Romabai was of course a benefactor of India but like "India and its Inhabitants" and other treatises of the same model. "The High-Caste Hindu Woman" is definitely more damaging to the nation than the "American Drain Inspector's" report as it was written by an Indian female of considerable erudition and experience Her book ended with a fervent appeal to America reading as follows :

> "In the name of humanity, in the name of your sacred responsibilities as workers in the cause of humanity and, above all, in the most holy name of God, I summon you, true women and men of America, to bestow your help quickly, regardless of nation, caste and creed."

The appeal did not go in vain. The restive American women of the late ninteenth century were eager to be of service to themselves and also to the world. It was the sign of inevitable self-assertion of a people on whom consciousness of their inherent strength was just dawning. They readily responded to the pathos created by Romabai and the response was so great that as many

as fifty-five centres of "Romabai Circle" were gradually formed in different important cities with influential men and women at their back Romabai left America with a lump-sum donation backed with the promise of a decent annual contribution for ten years for her proposed school for widows in India which she started in Bombay and Poona. In other words, heathens of India found another kind-hearted Christian missionary in Romabai.

Five years later when the Swami began to lecture in America, he had to face questions raised by the members of 'Romabai Circle" particularly about position of women in India When the Swami declared that women in India enjoyed much better property rights than their sisters in America, he created the greatest sensation in the circle. It naturally reached sharply upon the "imposter" monk and the result was that the "Romabai Circle" joined hands with his other three antagonists.

It is most astonishing bow an unknown, destitute, young monk with no influence at his back could muster courage to fight a combination of such formidable foes in a not too hospitable foreign land. His courage knew no bounds. He never begged for himself nor for his country. He never sought to maim his countrymen to arouse a sense of pity among the foreigners. On the other hand, he spoke of their culture, their religion, their heritage and all that makes their civilization He said that while the poor in India were in need of bread and not religion, both rich and poor in America were in need of spirituality. Far from being overpowered by the striking forces he had to grapple with, he exposed fearlessly to his Western audience the misdoings of the West in India with irrefutable facts and cogent arguments. He was unimaginably brave when he declared :

> "If All-India stands up and taken all the mud that is at the bottom of the Indian Ocean and throws it up against the Western countries, it will not be doing an infinitesimal part of that which you are doing to us."

It is in this background that the Swami's work in the West must be judged. In his vitality, boldness, personality and courage of conviction, he was a supreme lord In fact, he was the first real ambassador of India to the Western world An assessment of what the Swami has done for his motherland is impossible without a correct appreciation of this struggle.

But there is also the other side of the shield. The Swami had not to sow the seeds of the doctrine he carried in an entirely barren land Both in America and Europe, the philosophy of Vedanta was not entirely unknown. In fact, everywhere people in the religious and cultural fore-front were familiar with this doctrine. Some of them also digested and disseminated it.

As a home of dissenters, America was full of heterogenous elements. The Church was not as powerful as in Europe and society was loosely bound. It naturally became the breeding place of numerous beliefs and doctrines. Money was in plenty and women were trying to show up in all spheres except business and politics from which they were barred In all religious and cultural matters they took the leading part while the men were entirely left to dollar-earning. This is why all the support that the Swami got in America came principally, if not entirely, from the softer sex.

Of the various religious sects prevalent in America at the time when the Swami visited the country, people professing the doctrine of Christian Science, members of the society of Friends or Quakers, and the believers in the Unitarian Church were prominent.

Christian Science was based on the teachings of a Mrs. Eddy. She declared that her book entitled "Science and health with key to the Scripture" was a direct revelation to her by God. The faith she preached was claimed to be the only true religion. It declared that nothing except God was real, and the whole universe was an illusion. This doctrine denounced doctors medicine and drugs, and believed in spiritual control to everything from human health to bad weather. It was perhaps a peculiar combination of the sublime and the ridiculous But, surprisingly enough, the sect had very wide membership among wealthy people.

The doctrine of the Quakers is a protest against priesthood. The sect was founded by George Fox in the Seventeenth century in England but it flourished in America. The sect believed in man's power of direct communication with God This power they thought came from the "Inner light" of his own heart which of course was nothing but the light of Christ. Their congregation has no minister and there is no prepared speech. The Quakers meet in silence and one of the members has direct communication with the Holy Spirit and he utters messages for others.

Unitarianism had to be legally protected in England to prevent public torture of those who professed it. It however prospered in America. In Boston, which was the first field of operation of the Swami, the nineteenth century great literary figures of America, namely, Emersen, Longfellow, Whittier, Whitman, etc., were staunch believers in Unitarianism.

Unitarianism covers a very wide range of belief. Under this Church some believe that originally the nature of Christ was not divine but divine powers were delegated to him by the Father in heaven. Others believe that the goodness of Christ was of the same nature is that of any other great or good man in the world. As the very name indicates, the members believe in the single personality of God. It denounce the Christian Trinity and is nearer the monism of the Vedanta.

As we have seen before, the national consciousness of America was roused by President Monroe's doctrine of "Hands off America in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It found expression in law, literature and philanthropy. The national literature created during the period was the work of some celebrities which belonged to the Unitary Church. The seed of the Vedanta philosophy was sown by them. The Swami provided the sunshine and water for it to germinate and grow.

Among these writers who prepared the ground for the Swami in America, Emerson was the greatest and the foremost. An essayist, thinker, and poet of considerable eminence, he was read with avidity all over the world throughout the Nineteenth century. In the New World his writings shaped the thought and life of people more than anything else. A cosmopolitan and a profound believer in science, he visualized that every human soul was an original creation designed to take a distinct place in the world and to create new thought-currents. He asked people not to talk about discouraging things and strongly suggested that one must always talk courage and talk strength. If that was not possible, one should do better to keep silent.

"Character is higher than intellect" was the maxim he preached. The ancient precept of "Know Thyself" appeared to him in the modern garb of "Study Nature." He believed in Universal religion. He could not conceive how revelation could be confined to one religion only Among the mid-nineteenth century eminent writers of England, namely, Dickns. Thacberay,

Carlyle, Mathew Arnold, Tennyson etc., he was most friendly with Carlyle from whom he received a copy of the Gita.

Familiar with both the Western and Eastern currents of philosophical thoughts, he was fond of Hafiz, Confucius and Sacred Books of India. He gathered around him a circle of American intellectuals known as the "Concord School" which reminded one of the "Athens School" of Secrates. Concord was the name of a village where Emerson lived. Of the lofty thoughts preached by this school, the Swami wrote as follows :

> "If you want to know the source of Emerson's inspiration, it is this book, the Geeta. He went to see Carlyle, and Carlyle made him a present of the Gita; and that little book is responsible for the Concord Movement. All the broad movements in America, in one way or other, are indebted to the Concord party."

In a wonderful poem, Emerson describes Brahma as follows :

"If the red slayer he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.
Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.
"They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.
The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred seven;
But thou, meek lover of good !
Find me, and turn they back on heaven.

Emerson's oft-quoted lines, e.g., "The purpose of life seem to be to acquaint man with himself" and "Nothing can bring you peace but yourself" are not very distant echoes of the Vedanta. So the Swami's preaching were in full accord with the thought-current of the American intellectuals. And, Emerson died in 1882, only

eleven years before the Swami's arrival in America.

The two other contemporary and eminent American poets who bore the torch of Emerson were Whittier and Whitman Both these poets died in 1892 only a shortwhile before the Swami appeared in the scene.

Whittier, America's greatest religious poet, was a Quaker in his belief. His eulogies of "Inward life" were nothing but a recognition of the living spirit of God in all human souls. He discovered this all-pervading soul beyond the enslaving theological dogmas and forms.

The Swami called Walt Whitman "The Sanyasin of America". And this epithet he rightly deserved The philosophies of Emerson and Whitman are identical. Both fix their faith on the omnipotent and all pervading absolute reality, which Emerson calls "One perfect whole." The whole is composed of everything that exists in the world, including the fragmentary experiences of men. Whitman therefore accepts everything and rejects nothing in the world. In his outlook and profession he is a Vedantist monk. His philosophy is pure and simple monism. The sublime organic unity that exists between God and the material world was as clear to him as to a Vedantic Indian monk He expressed this belief in no uncertain terms in his book of poems, "Leaves of Grass."

The programme for his whole work is found in his poem "Song of Myself." Gleanings from this wonderful piece of poetry, given below, will indicate clearly how he sowed the seeds of ancient Indian wisdom in the soil of America

"For every atom belonging me to as good belongs to you."
"Has anyone suppose it lucky to be born ?
I hasten to inform him or her it is just as lucky to die, and know it
"I know I am deathless,
I know this orbit of mine can not be swept by a carpenter's compass,
I know I shall not pass like a child's carlacue cut with burnt stick at night."
"I hear and behold God in every object, yet understand God not in the least,
Nor do I understand who there can be more wonderful than myself,
Why should I wish to see God better than this day ?"

Both Emerson and Whitman were great believers in science. It is most likely that their ideas about unity of the world was greatly influenced by theory of evolution rather than by any philosophical doctrine. Darwin's famous book, "The Origin of Species" was published in 1859 and it created more stir in America than in England.

In fact, the influence of positive sciences on the Western mind was growing every day. It was shaping the people to fit in with the industrial civilization that was developing rapidly. Its impact on the traditional Christianity was more ravaging than that of Desiderius Erasmus, Martin Luther or John Calvin. The transformation was so radical that the Swami saw in it the virtual demolition of the foundation of Christian and other faiths of the West On top of this, the Swami perceived that luxury was eating into the vitals of all religious instincts. This chaotic situation therefore encouraged him to imagine that both of Europe and America were hopefully looking upto India for some succour in their spiritual distress. Much of it was of course his wishful thinking and Christianity, as before, adapted itself to the new condition in the West.

Anyway, proselytization of Europe and America was not the Swami's aim. Time and again he said it most forcefully. What pained him was that spirituality of the West was giving place to a materialistic faith. It portended evil for the humanity. He wanted to give the West, in exchange for some material benefit, a touch of the Eastern spirituality.

But the nascent force of positive sciences was irresistibly strong. In fact, it gradually brought in a revolution in the Western world. It is therefore most important to have a resume of the advancement of science, and its impact on the people upto the end of the nineteenth century. Without a reference to it, the effect of the Swami's message to the West cannot be fully understood.

Modern science is only four hundred years old. It dates back from the Sixteenth century, starting with Copernicus who died in 1543. Copernicus was the first astronomer to challenge the Aristotelian notion of the old world that the earth was the centre of the universe and that it did not rotate. According to his calculation the Sun was the centre of the universe. Moreover, the earth rotated on its own axis and also round the Sun. But

his discoveries were not published until three years after his death.

His findings were revolutionary in character, and they ran counter to the universally accepted belief preached by Aristotle and supported by the Church. It remained for Galileo to establish these truths some one hundred years later Galileo may, in a sense, be called the father of modern science and he had to suffer and, suffer terribly, at the hands of the almighty Pope for airing those anti-Church views.

Galileo also enunciated another truth. He proclaimed that the qualities e.g , colour, sound, taste, smell and touch, by which we know the various objects were caused by the arrangements or movements of atoms the objects are made of. In other words, these abstract qualities are really born of concrete "matter. So our relations with the world are entirely based on matter or, to put in another form, purely materialistic.

This perhaps was the beginning of the materialistic theory of the world. It found an able supporter in Descartes, the renowned French philosopher of the Seventeenth century. Newton, the famous English scientist who died in 1727, proved that the laws governing the movement of the heavenly bodies as also the earthly objects were indentical. So, God was partially dethroned from heaven and "Nature" and matter came into play. Newton's belief that the ultimate reality of the universe was the solid, impenetrable particle of matter was strongly supported by the successive findings of Lavoisier and Dalton a few years later. The result of all this was that in everything relating to the universe "spirit" gradually receded to the background and "matter" came into the forefront.

Once the positive sciences broke their tether from spirituality, they advanced on the material path rapidly. The matter, as opposed to spirit which became the centre of attraction in the new world, and man began to feel self-confident with a sense of growing power in him. He felt that he could interpret and control the natural forces quite easily.

From the domain of physics, scientists travelled gradually to Biology. There they came face to face with the mysteries and problems of the creation of the animal world which includes man. There was no end of species in this kingdom. Who or what force was creating them ? Even assuming that consciousness in these animals was somehow born out of the matter of which they were

composed, how can one explain the endless variety in them ? Does it suggest a creator behind the scene who shapes the different species with the same material ? The problem baffled the scientists. It was left to Darwin, the great English Biologist, to find a way out of the abyss only about one hundred years ago. His theories, of "Evolution" and "Natural selection" put the puzzled scientists again on their feet. It enabled them to dispense with the supposition of a creater, a God. It advanced the cause of the materialistic theory of the universe which means that the ultimate reality is matter and not spirit or God.

Germany, which was then the centre of the scientific world, hailed Darwin as the greatest liberator. His theory and fame reached every corner of the universe and America, which then had a predominently German population, received Darwin's theory with profound interest.

Both Newton and Darwin made such a deep impression on the minds of the Western people that their theories brought about a complete distrust in the stories of creation as narrated in the Bible. The zealous scientists waylaid Christianity and with it also the spiritualistic idealism.

The newly discovered "Atom" was just entering the world of science when the Swami visited the Western hemisphere. But even without it and, its contribution to the materialistic theory, the picture was fairly complete. Intellectuals all over the Western world were greatly moved by the revolutionary scientific discoveries The Renaissance had earlier diverted their attention from heavenly bliss to worldly comfort. How these discoveries and the growing power of man over Nature made them skeptic about the existence of any immanent force other than Nature herself. And, this force, they perceived, was being gradually conquered by man with the help of his scientific knowledge.

Industrialization was rearing up its head all over Europe and, with its growth, scientific discoveries were mounting. This industrial revolution gave birth to a new world. Old ways of life were yielding place to new ideas. Man's outlook on life and universe began to change radically. Christianity was losing ground as a live force and its place was being gradually taken up by science.

The Swami saw this rising tide of change in Europe. The change brought in its wake both weakness and strength. The

growing temporal strength was abundantly apparent, but the inversely declining spiritual perception was no less manifest.

The Swami therefore blamed the West on one account and admired it on another The Swami's message cannot be properly understood or judged without an appreciation of this background.

SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF AMERICA

It was 11th of September, 1893 The hall of Columbus in the Art Institute of Chicago was packed to capacity with some 4000 people eager to hear the representatives of the ten chief religions of the world. While the keen audience was familiar with Catholicism, the Greek Church, Protestantism and perhaps Judaism, it looked forward to learn something new from Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism and Zoreastrianism.

As the historians say, the end of the Nineteenth century in Europe was an age more international than any which had preceded it. At that age, no painter of Europe was satisfied unless he had made a pilgrimage to France; no musician was content unless he had undergone a course of training in Germany. There were international conferences on subjects ranging from religion to seismography, from medicine to yachtracing. But this internationalism was superficial and beneath it deep pulsing of national spirit was easily detectable. The Parliament of Religion summoned in America was no exception to this general rule of the day It was organised with the intention of proving the superiority of a national religion, i e, Christianity over other forms of faith.

The young Swami rose to speak. His novel and dignified dress, his magnetic personality, his bronze-bell voice cast a spell. He began to speak and, when his voice rang with the opening nable words, "Sisters and brothers of America", when were never uttered by any speaker, the effect was electric. There arose a spontaneous pear of applause which went on for several minutes. By his noble manner of address the Swami had instantly captured the American mind !

The Parliament sat from 11th September to 27th During this memorable fortnight the Swami's hold over a section of American

influential society was firmly established. He became so popular that his lectures were used by the organisers of the Parliament as a sop to the audience when it grew restive and impatient.

The reasons for this instant popularity were many. First, he was the youngest of the speakers; barely thirty years of age, attractive and handsome by the Western standard. Second, he spoke English with such fluency and elegance as was not heard usually from platforms and pulpits. Third, his wit, fineness of expression, intellectual agility were unparalleled. Fourth, the burden of his speech was cosmopolitan and not sectarian.

Naturally enough, more women than men gathered round him. It so always happens in every country and society. But it was more so in America where men occupied themselves entirely to dollar-earning and women to its free spending. Moreover, the American women of that age were intent on doing something great for themselves and others, and the Swami was an oriental novelty, worthy of notice.

But this popularity and fame also brought the Swami perhaps the toughest period of his life. We have seen how they created a great animosity and resentment among a group of influential people The great opposition he had to fight, poorly equipped and single-handed, lasted out full one year. He wrote his associates in India for help but no relief came from any quarter. In June 1894 he wrote in distress to Haridas Viharidas in Jungarh as follows :

> "Had our people sent some words thanking the American people for their kindness to me and stating that I was representing them ! On the other hand, * * * have been telling the American people that I have donned the Sannyasi's garb only in America and that I was a cheat, pure and simple."

Complete silence from the home front about the vicious slanders merely tended to confirm them. But at last a great relief came from Calcutta in the shape of a report of a momentous and representative meeting held there on 4th September 1894. The meeting extolled the work of the Swami in America and also accorded a vote of thanks to the Americans for the courtesy and kindness shown to him. The Swami thus touched some solid ground to stand upon.

Since then and, till the end of his first overseas tour, the

Swami's progress in America was unimpaired. He returned to India in January 1897 but, before his return, he visited the old Europe in 1895 and the following year. The purpose in each case was to preach the Vedanta.

He founded the nucleus of the Vedanta Society in the Western world in 1894 in New York. It was no doubt a monument of his untiring effort to give the Westerners a taste of the ancient wisdom of India, but it also speaks highly of American catholicity. The receptive nature of the Americans made his lectures popular and remunerative. And, on the whole, he was very hopeful of his mission in that continent during his first visit But the spell did not last long. During his second visit in 1899 he could easily find out that his hopes were baseless and illusive. As a result, he expressed his disappointment most categorically.

By his apparent success in America he was encouraged to try his message in old Europe During his first visit to England in 1895 he grew very hopeful of its ready acceptance. In fact, the possibilities looked to him brighter in England than elsewhere. And he made several premature, jubilant comments on its future. Writing to Alasinga in Madras on 24-10-1895 he said "So far you see the seed is well sown in England", and on 13-11-1895 he wrote to Swami Akandananda :

> "You might have noticed from papers that our movement is steadily—gaining ground in England Every enterprise in this country takes some time to have a go. But once John Bull sets the hand to a thing, he will never let it go. The Americans are quick, but they are somewhat like—straw on fire, ready to be extinguished."

But inspite of this praise for the English he seems to have loved the Yankee-land more than England.

The Swami's public and group lectures in America began even before his appearance on the international religious platform in Chicago. To begin with, his theme covered diverse subjects relating to India, but gradually and, particularly when lecturing in small groups, it gravitated towards Indian philosophy and religion. And, finally it culminated in the exposition of the Vedanta philosophy.

Speaking generally, his lectures in America and England may

be classified under two categories. One set is religious and philosophical and the other—cultural With equal force, cogency and erudition he placed the Indian view point on both fronts. And, he easily satisfied the audience whenever it raised post-lecture querries.

The Swami was the first Hindu Sannyasin to cross ever to the West In fact, he was the first real ambassador of India. From him the West got a clear and lucid exposition of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the systems of Hindu philosophy.

In describing the Hindu mind and its spiritual aptitude, he said :

> "To the Hindu, man is not travelling from error to truth, but from truth to truth—from lower truth to—higher truth. To him all religions, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realize the Infinite, each determined by the condition of its birth and association; and each of these attempts marks a stage of progress."

This is why the Hindus accept everything in the spiritual world and reject nothing. This is why they have never indulged in religious persecution; on the contrary, they have always given shelter to the persecuted When the Romans drove the Hebrews out of their country, Hindus gave them shelter in India When the Zoroastrians in Persia were annihilated by Mahommedans, a section of them found a ready sanctuary in India. The Jews of Malabar and the Parsees of Bombay bear testimony to this universal and open hospitality.

Within its fold Hinduism carries—atheism, agnosticism, monism and even recognition of thirty-three crores of godheads ! It is a peculiar synthesis that knows no barriers or limits. A Hindu never fights with others in contesting that his way is the only way to self-realization or salvation.

Being himself a Hindu, the Swami declared that he could never think of converting anyone to his faith. Then what was the purpose of his preaching this gospel to the Non-Hindus ? The purpose, he said, was to make a man a better man, a Catholic a better Catholic, a Protestant a better Protestant. His call to the Christians was an appeal to them to return to Christ, to give up

the civilization which is based on hunger and not on God. He said to them :

> "With all your brag and boasting, where has your Christianity succeeded without the sword ? Yours is a religion preached in the name of luxury. It is all hypocrisy that I have heard in this country. All this prosperity ! all this from Christ ! Those who call upon Christ care for nothing but to amass riches ! Christ would not find a stone on which to lay his head among you * * * You are not Christians. Return to Christ !"

Christianity, as the Swami said, was a direct offspring of Buddhism and Buddhism was an offshoot of the Vedic religion. Buddha merely popularised the doctrines of the Upanishads. Buddhism grew and prospered in the cradle of Hinduism. Only at one time Buddha's influence was great, and it led to the adoption of universal monasticism as the ideal of the people in general. The consequent and inevitable result was the ruin of the Hindu community.

The basic correspondence between Buddhism and Catholic Christianity is clearly noticeable. The Swami considered, with historical justification, that Christianity was merely a national adaptation of Buddhism. His argument in outline was this :

> Buddhism is the first proselytizing religion in the world. The great Indian king Asoka sent his missionaries to Greece, among other countries, some three hundred years before Christ was born. They sowed the seed of a religion which in course of time took the form of Christianity of the Nazareth type. Each country of the West has thereafter adapted the original form to suit the mood of its people. Has not Buddhism been transformed by the Chinese and the Japanese or even by the Far-Eastern countries to suit their individual national need ?

To many the idea may be revolting, but some facts in support of this theory of genesis are convincing. The theory cannot be brushed aside without a closer study.

Manichaean heresy is now regarded universally as a teaching

of a sect of the Buddhists. The doctrine of Trinity, of the incarnation of God, the high ethical conception and even the services in the Catholic Church are mere echoes of Buddhistic doctrines and rituals. The Mass, the Benediction of Christianity are merely revised versions of old Buddhistic forms ! Christ's love is nothing but Buddha's 'Ahimsa'.

The Swami spoke also of Islam and prophet Mohammad. Greatly appreciative of the prophet's doctrine of brotherhood of man, he said that Islam had introduced the philosophy of Vedanta in daily life. And this was exactly where its strength lay. "An Islamic body and a Vedantic heart" was what he visualized as the ideal combination of a community, particularly suited to India.

And Vedanta, he has said, is the highest conception of the Hindu world. It is the source of the greatest strength and freedom. Both Christianity and Islam have concluded their gospels by pronouncing and preaching the brotherhood and equality of man. Vedanta has gone one step further. It has deduced and declared boldly that man is not merely a part of the immanent force that permeates the universe; he himself is that force. He himself is the Brahma or the Ultimate Reality, and that nothing exists in the universe except his own self.

Christopher Isherwood, a noted advocate of the Vedanta, has put this gospel for the West in the following manner :

> "First, that man's real nature is divine. Second, the aim of human life is to realize the divine nature. Third, that all religions are essentially in agreement."

The Vedanta teaches that self or the divine nature of human life can be realized in this very life. No one has to wait until death for this realization. When self is realized, a person sees the world just as a reader perceives the scenes described in a book. The reader turns page after page, experiences various sentiments like love, jubilation, sorrow, fear, hatred etc. but all these perceptions make no difference to his own self. It remains unaltered. In the same way, the ever-changing scenes of the world from birth to death do not touch the self-realized person, enjoys the world just as a spectator takes delight in an interesting game or an absorbing cinema show !

Hinduism speaks of four paths of self-realization. They are : (1) Karma-yoga or the path of action, (2) Jnana-yoga or the

path of knowledge, (3) Bhakti-yoga or the path of devotion, and (4) Raja-yoga or the path of concentration of mind. Not only did he deliver interesting and illuminating lectures, but also did he write a series of books on them in English. In America, these lectures proved remunerative and the books earned good royalty. But in England they did not pay their way.

Of these books and paths, Raja-yoga caught the imagination of the Westerners more than the others. The volume on Raja-yoga was considered as a mervellous book, and it was translated into several European languages. The intelligentsia all over Europe and America hailed this path as a novel system, and even devout Christians held it in as much reverence as their own Scriptures.

The enthusiasfs in America took tutorial lessons in Raja-yoga from the Swami in small groups. And these groups formed the foundation of the edifice which the Swami built in America.

The other set of lectures delivered by 'the cyclonic Hindu monk' was cultural in nature. It centered round Indian heritage and was aimed at removing the ignorance of the West about India's past and present. The learned monk narrated, quoting the authority of the noted orientalists, India's contribution to the world of science. Her contribution to medicine and surgery was unique. Algebra, geometry and astronomy were invented in India, and even the ten numerals, which form the corner-stone of present civilization, were her monumental contribution.

In the field of philosyphy, no other nations of the world can held a candle to India. In music, India has given to the world her system of notation with several cardinal notes and the diatonic scale before the birth of Christ. Her vast and old Sanskrit literature has given the famous Aesop's fables in Europe and the wonderful Arabian Nights to the Middle East. She was the first to produce cotton and a variety of dye and her silk and jewellery were earned the highest merit and appreciation in the world market. In games, her contribution was chess cards, and dice. A good many of these inventions and contributions, however, reached Europe not direct but through Arabia and they were rendered into Greek and Latin from the Arabic.

"But" the monk thundered "What return has India got from the world for all these gifts ?" She has received only vilification, curse and contempt. It is an irony of fate that she is now no better than a sucked orange, and her sons and daughters have been

reduced to utter misery and poverty. On top of this injury, the West is adding insult to that ancient land by preaching through a host of mischievous missionaries a religion "which can only thrive on the destruction of every other religion."

The Swami had no axe to grind. So he never hesitated either to reprove or to praise anyone, holding the balance correctly. And, in doing so, he was not misunderstood. His humanistic view on all matters was so obvious that none could dream of imputing a politically narrow motive to him. While the brighter side of American woman pleased him immensely, the darker side made him sad. When glad he said :

> "Their women—they are the most advanced in the world. The average American woman is far more cultivated than the average American man."

But sad and rate on another turn, the same Swami announced:

> "I should he glad to see a dozen spiritual women in America. Nice dress, wealth, brilliant society, operas, novels,—even intellectuality is not all that there is for a man or woman. There should also be spirituality, but that side is entirely absent from Christian countries. They live in India."

It was a reproof born of love and not of hatred.

On the cultural side, the Swami's lectures on Indian social customs, Indian women's position, and legal rights as compared with their sisters in America were most illuminating and exciting. He was the first Indian to explain to the world that Indian caste system, in its original form, was a natural and useful institution. But "caste is a social custom; religion has nothing to do with it." The Swami said that it was not only the West that misunderstood the implication of Indian caste system, but Indians themselves suffered from the same misconception. In fact, he castigated all who tried their hands at the reformation of caste-system without understanding its implication. This is why he said :

> "Failure ! Beginning from Buddha down to Ram Mohan Roy, every one made the mistake of holding caste to be a religious institution, and tried to pull down religion and caste all together, and failed. But inspite of all the ravings of the

priests, caste is simply a crystallized social institution which, after doing its service, is now filling the atmosphere of India with its stench, and it can only be removed by giving back to the people their lost social individuality."

THE SWAMI'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE WEST

As the Swami himself had said, the chief aim of his visit to America was to raise funds to start work for rejuvenating India. To what extent, if any, was this plan realized ?

A candid answer to this question is that his plan failed, and perhaps failed miserably. From whatever angle the question may be judged, this verdict can hardly be modified. It seems that one cannot but agree with Romain Rolland when he says :

> "Indeed, when he summed up his long pilgrimage of four years and the treasures he was carrying to his Indian people, spiritual riches : treasures of the soul, were not the least from which India was to benefit. But was it not more vital and urgent to remedy the misery of India ? The urgent help he had gone to get, the handful of corn gleaned from the fields of the monstrous wealth of the West, to save the millions of men from annihilation, the monetary help he needed to rebuild the physical and mental health of his people—was he bringing it to them ? No. In that respect his journey had failed."

It must, however, be said that the Swami never begged for his country. Neither did he try to raise funds by generating pity. That was of his way. He thought of an honourable exchange. He wanted the West to benefit from the spiritual experience of the East. In exchange in this gift, the West, he thought; should help the East to get rid of its abject poverty.

With the failure of one part of the exchange, it is remains the other part to be considered Did it succeed ? How did the West react to the Swami's Universal Gospel ?

From an outer angle, Christopher Isherwood has aptly summarised the Swami's message to the West and the East in the following words :

> "Vivekananda had two messages to deliver : one to the East, and the other to the West. In the United States and in

England, he preached the universality of religious truth, attacked materialism, and advocated spiritual experiment as against dogma and tradition. In India, on the other hand, we find that he preferred to stress the ideal of social service. To each, he tried to give what was most lacking."

But judging in the light of inner conception, he has preached the Vedanta and the Vedanta only in his both messages. The two messages were basically the same; only they differed in the emphasis, modelled to suit people in different stages of development.

To the Swami, the life was a complete whole. His vision was not confined to the narrow religious aspect only. So his views were quite different from those of other orthodox monks of the Vedantic Order. "Vedanta in practical life" is a theme which he developed in his several lectures in London in November, 1896. Those, together with other lectures on the same aspect of the Vedanta delivered elsewhere, indicate how broadly he visualized this philosophy or, shall we call it a religion, permeating the entire existence in the universe

In his illuminating lectures on the Vedanta at Lahore in November, 1897, he expressed his views in the following manner :

'Believe, therefore, in yourselves, and if you want material wealth, work it out; it will come to you. If you want to be intellectual, work it out on the intellectual plane, and intellectual gaints you shall be. And if you want to attain to freedom, work it out on the spiritual plane, and free you shall be, and shall enter into Nirvana, the Eternal Bliss. But one defect which lay in the Advaita was its being worked out so long on the spiritual plane only, and nowhere else; now the time has come when you have to make it practical. It shall no more be a Rahasya, a secret, it shall no more live with monks in caves and forests, and in the Himalayas, it must come down to the daily, everyday life of people . . . ."

The Vedanta is a religion of absolute equality. There is, in this religion, no difference between a man and a man except that they are in different stages of development. But everyone in moving towards the same goal—perfection or self-realization.

Man creates his own destiny. He himself is the Ultimate Reality He himself is that immanent force which people call God, the Omnipotent. But this sense of identity or one-ness is not confined to man only. It is extended to all creatures of the universe and, in fact, to everything either animate or inanimate.

The Swami pointed out that Darwin's theory of physical evolution is an echo of what the old Indian philosopher, Patanjali said. With the acceptance of Darwin, absolute monism or the Vedanta has become the most scientific religion of the world. Speaking, therefore, in Sanfransisco in April, 1990 on Vedanta as a future religion, he expressed a hope that America, in fact, the West, might accept this religion as it is based both on democracy and science. He thought that absolute monism cannot become the religion of India since Indian people were undemocratic and they looked for an all-powerful king to rule over them. He did not mention science perhaps because what is termed as modern science was not then widely known in India.

The Swami was encouraged in his views by what he observed in America.

WHAT DID HE SEE THERE ?

Refugees from different European countries were arriving at the shores of America, demoralised, famished and frightened. With no other earthly possession, they arrived in rags wearing a face of utter despair. But the table turned in six month's time. At the end of this short period, each one of them stood with his head erect, full of determination and energy. How could this miracle happen ? It happened by the magic touch of self-confidence. Recognition of their inborn strength and human rights in America changed them altogether. Warm and honourable reception in a perfectly democratic country turned them into loans from lambs.

The picture inspired the Swami to comment : ". . . Ay, in this country of ours, the very birth place of Vedanta, our masses have been hypnotised for ages into that State To touch them is pollution, to sit with them is pollution ! Hopeless they were born, hopeless they must remain !"

In the light of the hope expressed by the Swami, the position in America and in Europe needs a little more critical study.

In America, as we have seen, the Vedanta was not an entirely

novel thing to the intelligentsia. Emerson and Whitman were notable precursors of this philosophy. The Unitarian Church, firmly settled in Boston, preached mouism and abjured Trinity. Of course, it had a Christian approach and not a universal humanitarian background as in the Vedanta. But the idea was already there.

So the Swami's message did not spring a surprise on this group of Americans The intelligentsia admired him, heard him alternatively, invited him to lecture at the Harvard University, and even offered him the Chair of Oriental philosophy in recognition of his meet But that was all they did. His message did not change their way of life; it merely extended their scope of study.

The group that gathered around the Swami in America consisted mostly of women. Writing to Miss Albert Sturges in December, 1895, he regretted that among those who attended his classes there was hardly a sprinkling of high-class men and women. Writing to Alsinga in March, 1896, from America he gave him the glad tidings that he had been able to gather uptil then only two initiated sannyasin disciples and a few hundreds of house-holders as devotees But in the same breath, the Swami warned him that, except a few, all of them were poor These exceptions were, however, very rich.

This wealthy group included Miss Muller and Mrs. Ole Bull. While Miss Muller's generosity made it possible for the Swami to purchase seven acres of land at Belur,—Calcutta, for the cenrtal Math, the Math itself was built largely through the munificence of Mrs. Bull. But that is another story.

Even during his first visit it did not escape the Swami that men in America started earning money very early in life. They were very clever at doing it. The country assessed a man's worth only in terms of his earning capacity With the exception of an infinitesimal percentage, no one cares for religion On the face of it, Christianity was based on a sense of nationality or formality and nothing else. It was, therefore, no wonder that he was getting sick of his lecture tours.

His audience, consisting of nearly all women, hardly knew anything about spirituality. They had no sense of the higher ideals of life or religion. Possibly the bulk of them were either members of the Christian Science group or those who had secret admiration for it. They would take to a religion if it could yield a tangible

earthly benefit. This state of things made the Swami to wail.

"After all, I am getting disgusted with this lecturing business. It will take a long time for the Westerners to understand the higher spirituality. Everything is £ S.D. to them. If a religion brings them money or health or beauty or long life, they will all flock to it, otherwise not . . . .

Disappointment in life must have been the sense of attachment to this Hindu monk in some states. A notable case was that of Mrs. Ole Bull who at twenty married "an unconventional free society artist", sixty years old much against her parents' will. The artist, a noted violonist, died ten years later, leaving the widow a baby-girl and a sizable fortune.

But the coming in of this wealthy section of his associates was as easy as its going out. Mrs. Johnson left him as she thought that the Swami's sickness belied his holiness. So did Miss Henrietta Muller foregoing her undeniable claim on the piece of Belur land. Landsberg, his initiated sannyasin disciple, too, was a deserter. Leggott, who was the first president of the Vedanta Society in America, served his connection. Madame Calve, the noted musician of the West who provided a stunt for publicity and even visited the Belur Math after the Swami's passing away, went back to the Catholic fold. This, however, is not an exhaustive list.

There is no doubt that the Swami's associates and devotees looked for some concrete results, something tangible here and now, and not an abstract philosophy. Such an expectation was in line with the trend in Christianity, particularly after its impact with modern science which called for practical and intelligible proof of its utilitarian value. This is why Raja-yoga took the pride of place among Swami's teachings.

Raja-yoga with its eighty-four 'Asanas' or postures of body control and 'pranayama' or breathing control aims at the control of mind through breathing and meditation. It moves through eight distinct stages. The whole system is based on a philosophy in which both physical, mental and spiritual training and development go hand in hand. The purely physical side of it, commonly known as Hatha-yoga, has also been developed in India by lesser minds. It has no spiritual affiliation and its aim is merely to improve physique and increase longevity. And, of course, it yields spectacular results in its limited scope.

Sooner perhaps than the Swami could imagine, Raja-yoga classes degenerated into Hatha-yoga acrobatic feats and consequently became extremely popular. Romain Rolland commented on this unfortunate development as follows :

> "Hence the interested pragmatism of thousands of dupes has rushed to seize upon these real or faked methods with a gross spiritualism differing but little from a commercial transaction with them faith is medium of exchange whereby they may acquire the goods of the world; money, power, health, beauty, virility."

Such a degeneration was inevitable and natural. America was young and had amassed immense fortune. She could not have but thought of enjoying her youth and wealth to the fully. The ideal of renunciation was gall to her.

But what was the result of cultivation of these acrobatic feats of Hatha-yoga ? Let us see what Count Herman Keyserling said :

> "It is very significant the Indian breathing excercise, which have been popularised by Swami Vivekananda through his lectures in America, huve not helped a single American to a higher condition, but, on the other hand, they are reported to have brought all the more into hospitals and lunatic asylums. Hatha-yoga is considered, even in India, as dangerous; many excercises have been branded by all authorities long ago as unquestionably derogatory, and they merely continue, thanks to the eradicable tendency of all men to prefer dubious to undubious means, but it has not been proved, even of the most harmless excercises among them, that they are appropriate to the organism of the European, it may be that they do more than good in the case of most people."

This acrid comment was not levelled against suitability or Raja-yoga to the Europeans. The Count made no bones to praise it. He met Annie Besant who confessed to him that she owed her occult powers to Indian yoga. Writing on her achievement, the Count said :

"Mrs. Besant controls herself—her powers, her thought, her

feelings, her volitions, so prefectly that she seems to be capable of greater achievements than men of greater gifts. If yoga is capable of so much, it may be capable of even more, and thus appears entitled to one of the highest places among the paths to self-perfection."

Speaking psychologically, the material aspect of yoga was naturally more appealing to the Western mind Only a few of the Westerners could ever get over the purely physical boundary to the spiritual plane So Hatha-yoga triumphed over Raja-yoga, and is still included in the physical course of training in the West.

There was a further psychological factor to take into account. It was this. No one wanted to hear a poor, dependent country even if her message was exceedingly noble. And India's poverty was as disgraceful as her subjugation degrading. How could she command any respect ? To an average Westerner her position seemed most confusing. Was India's own repressing internal condition compatible with her external inspiring message ? No. If the country was so poor, how could her religion and culture be so great ?

This, however, is not an imaginary point. An authentic biographer has given a positive proof of this disadvantage. The Swami met a plain-speaking Roman Catholic minister in America. The clergy man politely asked him to go back home and to become "Peter the Hermit" of India first. When the freedom of his country had been won and, the Swami was able to look "horizont-ally" on Western eyes, the Westerners would be ready to hear him. Unless India could prove her worth, any attempts to influence other countries would be futile The Swami perhaps realized the truth of this plain talk as his saying appeared to signify Writing to Alasinga in September, 1894 he said :

"Our field is India, and the value of foreign appreciation is in rousing India up. That is all."

Whatever little of India's voice was heard in America was no more than the Swami's personal message. It was all a personal affair. The Americans like him in person and not as India's representative. They heard him and not India. If America

women adored him and, even some offered to marry him, it was a homage paid to a personality and not to India. And it is not far from truth to suggest that this American amity for India died a natural death with the Swami's final departure from that country.

But a question will then immediately cross one's mind. It is this. If the above deduction is correct, how can we account for the progressive establishment of as many as one dozen religious embassies in America ? How can we account for the large donations made by some Americans to the mission ? How can we explain so many visits by Americans to Belur Math and even to the remote village sanctuaries erected at Sree Ramakrishna's and his consort's native places at Kamarpukur and Jayrambati respectively ?

We must get below the surface for an answer.

Encouraged at times by ready response from his American associates, the Swami expressed the hope that the doctrine of Vedanta would sweep along the whole of the New continent. He imagined that material enjoyment to society would usher in a spiritual dawn in the West The other Swami's who followed in his footsteps cherished the same hope. But all of them, it is felt, had been indulging in wishful thinking, ignoring the eternal truth that luxury merely added fuel to the fire of desire. The exception proves the rule in some individual cases, but never in the case of nations. So, inspite of these pious wishes, the West's hunger for material enjoyment still remains unabated.

With the increasing emphasis on matter as opposed to spirit, Christianity's hold over Western mind has very largely broken down. Humanism is gradually taking its place. People are looking to positive sciences to provide a new basis for idealism and faith. Uncertainty and doubt prevail everywhere. Luxury, power, pomp and sensual enjoyment can satisfy the animal needs, but intellectual humanity yearns for something more. The problems of mental disease, adhocism, boredom, sense of helplessness at old age, and nurosis are gradually looming large in America. These are the inevitable signs of these which is caused by an entirely material view of life. The resulting uneasiness is making some Americans move about the world for a cure. They make pilgrimages to Assisi in Italy, Sainte-Anne-de Beaupre in Canada, Guadalupo in Mexico, Rome and Jerusalem. India, too,

is on their itinerary. Here, in addition to Ropedancers, Snake-charmers, Himalayan Mahatmas, and Devadashis, they also look in for the Ramakrishna movement centres for a change.

Apart from curiosity, which as a young nation they have in abundance, Americans have a respect for the Swami. Candidly John Yale, a young Yankee who lived with the Swamis in India for a while, has explained this attachment as recently as 1961 in the following manner :

> "Swamiji has always appealed to me, as I think he does to many Americans, because well, because he was so ideal a man and saint and yet seems so human and somehow so—Western."

Yes, this "so Western" feeling about the Swami explains to a large extent his popularity in America. But American' pilgrimage to the Ramakrishna Movement Centres in India, speaking generally, has no more significance than curiosity. A tourist while in Egypt will naturally look in for the Pyramids. And the Indian "Pyramids" are kept in the picture by the religious embassies in America.

If there is any one who sees more than curiosity in it, and imagines that material enjoyment to satiety is leading America to spirituality, Yale's comments may be presented to him P.A. Sorokin, a Harvard sociologist, he says, calculated not long ago that in the United States everyone encounters some kind of sexual lure every nine minutes of the Working day !

Partly due to her youth and partly due to the methods of her growth, America, unlike the old Europe, is not conservative. If that was not so, sects professing Christian Science, Unitarism and similar other heretic views could not have found a distinct place there. Writing to Alasinga in July, 1895, the Swami himself estimated that only one-third of the total population in America was really Christian It is a sign of plenty and catholicity. These two specific peculiarities of the New continent have made it possible for the Vedanta centres to be established and maintained in America.

The Swami's oratory was of a very high order, and so was that of some other monks who succeeded him. Even by 1901, before the Swami passed away, his immediate successor in America,

Swami Abhedananda, attracted large audience. An efficient batch of organisers bent all their energies to gain a footing in that country. With Abhedananda and Bodhananda in New York, Trigunatita and Prakashananda in San Fransisco, and Paramananda in Boston and Washington, the nucleus of the outposts created by the Swami was quickly developed. Foundations of Vedanta or "Hindu" temples were laid around 1906 at New York and San Fransisco with the munificence of some American female devotees. Desertion of Swami Abhedananda later from the orthodox fold in 1910, and assassination of Trigunatita by a bomb thrown on to the pulpit by an American in 1914 no doubt caused a serious set-back to progress, but not to the extent of closing down the organisation Since then the Vedanta has moved through American wilderness. Surviving as an Eastern novelty, it has provided some Indian monks with comfortable living in America and some less-informed Indians a publicity board to play with And, in its contact with the New World, the Vedanta has taken a Western hue

Such tarnish as has touched Vedanta was inevitable. Even the staunchest idealist has to yield to the forces of environment. And naturally, changes work more rapidly when alien preachers have to depend on the generosity of the people among whom they live and preach. Moreover, if solitary life in a Himalayan cave can change a man's outlook on life, it will be idle to protest that luxurious living in New York or San Fransisco or Hollywood does not affect it gradually and imperceptively. On top of this, it may be as well to remember that every one in ochre robe is not a Vivekananda !

Has not Christianity, Buddhism and even rigid Islam changed similarly ? In India and in China as elsewhere Christianity had to adopt itself to local customs, tradition and even rituals to gain a foothold. Wherever its integrity was upheld, as the Pope decided to do at times Christianity failed to march on. Its history is not very old.

The Vedanta, however, is not a bundle of tennets. Neither is it a proselytizing religion. So what argument is there to cling to these embassies in America only to secure it survived in a tainted form ? Chicken raising may be a good support for a monastery, "Vilwa" leave may be replaced by rose leaves in daily worship, "upstart English" may take the place of "venerable Sanskrit" in

rituals, and the Swami may officiate at funeral service for the devotees when they die, but these and similar other adaptations merely portend the birth of a type of "occidental" Vedanta. Hollywood may sing "Rama-nama" regularly, but it is hard to imagine that Valmiki will be born out of it. A grace before meals may be said from the Gita, but it will not certainly dispel the illusion of an Arjuna !

What, however, are these religious embassies exactly; math or mission, or both combined into one ? They are no doubt affiliated to the main centre at Belur, but their utility is questionable except as prestige points and resounding boards to create a din in India.

The Swami's initial idea about the utility and work of the Foreign Department of the Ramakrishna Mission was laid down by himself as follows :

> "Its work in the Foreign Department should be to sent trained members of the Order to countries outside India to bring about a closer relation and better understanding between India and foreign countries."

But it does not seem possible that, on his return from the West after his second visit in 1900, he still had any further illusion about the role of the Vedanta in bringing about a 'closer relation' either with America or with Europe.

Romain Rolland has set down the Swami's final views on the West in the following manner :

> "He had realized that during his first journey he had been caught by the power the organisation and the apparent democracy of America and Europe. Now he had discovered the spirit of lucre, of greed, of Mammon, with its enormous combinations of ferocious struggle for supremacy."

But Sister Nivedita puts it most categorically and conclusively :

> "When he first landed in the West, he was greatly attracted, as his letters show, by the apparent democracy of conditions there. Later in 1900, he had a clearer view of the underlying

> selfishness of Capital and the struggle of privilege, and eonfided to some one that Western life looked to him 'Like Hell' "

And, the hell with its vulgarity, sensuality, lust for power and greed of a newly rich Community in America no doubt provides engaging fun, but nowhere round its corner can yet germinate the seed of renunciation.

America is so near yet so far !

No doubt, the Swami developed a soft corner in his heart for the American people, but evidently he cherished more hopes of his success in England than in America. He felt that there was a greater understanding between the Indians and the Englishmen and that English education and civilization were of a higher order. He also felt that the Vedanta plant had struck roots in English soil and that, in his absence, his first English disciple. Mr. Sturdy would be able to protect and nurture it to its full glory.

Compared to the Americans the English people were sober and he counted on this apparent sobriety in building up his hopes, He wrote to Alasinga in November 1895 :

> "In England my work is really splendid. I am astonished myself at it. The English people do not talk much in the newspapers, but they work silently. I am sure of more work in England than America."

But inspite of these high hopes, the Swami and, later his Indian compeers, were unable to get even a food-hold not only in England but also in the whole of old Europe. England, France and Germany all had a look at the commodity he offered, but they all refused to buy it. Why was it so ?

In Europe, particularly in England, a large section of the intelligentsia began to grow interested in Indian philosophy and culture through Max Muller and Madame Blavatsky about the end of the Nineteenth century. Mentions have been made of Madame Blavatsky earlier, but not of Max Muller. This German professor and Sanskrit scholar was born in 1823 and graduated from Leipzig University in 1843. He settled down in Oxford and remained there until he died in 1900. His services were utilised by the English East India Company to edit a series of

publication entitled "The Sacred Books of the East" By temperament, erudition and sympathy, he was eminently suited to this purpose. And his work is a monument of his glory and an inestimable service to the Hindus. Raja Radhakanta Dev, an erudite Indian aristocrat of that age, was the first to admit the value of the professor's services with profuse praise and words of gratitude

His Buddhist Sutras came out to 1881, the Bhagabat Gita in 1882, and the Upanishads in 1883. The intelligentsia of England instantly grew highly interested, and the philosophers intensely engaged. In addition to editing these Scriptures, the professor wrote and lectured on Hinduism, Indian civilization, Sanskrit literature, and philosophy. His lectures to the candidates for the Indian Civil Service were full of praise for India. He tried to remove the wide-spread notion, which almost became article of faith with many, that Indians were inherently mendacious and infinitely inferior to Europeans both intellectually and spiritually.

At the invitation of the professor, the Swami met him in Oxford in 1895. An ardent lover of the Vedanta, he watched with interest both the Swami's and his compeers' efforts to preach this doctrine in America. He himself wrote the life of Sree Ramakrishna in the "Nineteenth Century", a periodical of repute and tried to popularise this Indian saint and also the doctrine of Vedanta in the West, "Vedanta," he wrote, "is still a moral and political power in India. * * * But I claim more for the Vedanta, and I recommend its study, not only to the candidates for the Indian Civil Service, but to all true students of philosophy. It will bring before them a view of life, different from all other views of life which are placed before us in the history of philosophy."

Madame Blavatsky also lent her hand in popularising India, but in a quite different manner. As a spirit-rapper, she preached spiritualism in the Indian background, while Max Muller unfolded and presented India's spirituality. Blavatsky; who was completely ignorant of Sanskrit, never met Max Muller inspite of their common interest, although she lived in England for a while. Speaking of her achievements, Max Muller wrote "lasting mischief had been done to India by her and her friends."

The Swami was of the same opinion. He considered

Theosophy as an "Indian grafting of American spiritualism with only a few Sanskrit words taking the place of spiritualistic jargon". "Indian thought," he added, "charlatanry and mango-growing fakirism had all become identified in the minds of the educated people in the West, and this was all the help rendered to Hindu religion by the Theosophists."

In fact, the Vedanta and Theosophy get so much mixed up in the West that, except to philosophers, the two became synonimous. And, this confusion was constantly confounded by Madame Blavatsky, commonly known as H.P.B.

Whether you call her a "Russian cat" or declare her to have achieved "a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting imposters in history" she must be given per dues. She knew perfectly well how to go about her business. and make things interesting, attractive and mystic to the West. Conversion of A.O. Hume of Indian reputation to Theosophy added a feather to her European cap. And Annie Besant, who revolted against Christianity in agony and came under her fold, secured her access to Indian homes.

In Mohini Chatterjee, a talented Bengali scholar, she found an able Vedanta preacher. She made him a special emissary, and he preached Vedanta in London and Dublin a few years before the Swami arrived in England.

The Irish poet Yeats, who received the Nobel Prize in 1923, was of esoteric leaning. He was instantly attracted by both H.P B. and Mohini Chatterjee. His attachment was so great that he even wrote a poem on this Vedanta preacher. Geergo Russell, a friend of Yeats, who is better known by his pen-name A.E., was also equally attracted. And so were many other persons of eminence.

When, therefore, the Swami arrived in England to preach the Vedanta, his message gave no new light to the intelligentsia. The philosophers had already accepted the system, and for the common man it had no special appeal. The general reluctance to consider its merit may partly be ascribed to its country of origin; it was a common feeling that India could not produce any superior commodity. The other reason was the quick march of Madame Blavatsky's pseude-Vedanta which grew more and more attactive because of its mystic colour. On top of this, as an America so in Europe too rapid progress of positive sciences

growth deterred philosophical studies.

The result was that, although the Swami's lessons drew the attention of some thinkers and Orientalists, the general public did not take them seriously. Yeats was at that time so much engrossed with Blavatsky that perhaps the Swami's voice did not reach his ears. Yet few years later when the greater poet Rabindranath Tagore visited London, Yeats developed a deep interest in his mystic, oriental ideas, and his active appreciation of the Indian poet paved the way for the award of Noble prize to an Asiatic for the first time in 1913. The great novelist Galsworthy's interest in the Swami also appears to have ended in smoke. The few persons the Swami could claim to have taken in his fold were Mr. Sturdy, an ex-Theosophist, Miss Nobel, then a love-lorn young Irish girl. Captain Sevier, an ex-army officer who had spent five years in India before and his wife, Mr. Goodwin, a young idealist.

All of them were, however, attracted to him in person and not to the doctrine of Vedanta. And, at the instance of the Swami, they undertook to serve India.

But it did not take long for the Swami to get over the spell of illusion caused by their apparent sincerity of purpose. Writing to Miss Noble from Almora, the Swami wailed in July 1897 :

> "Mrs. Sevier is a jewel of a lady so good, so kind ! The Seviers are the only English people who do not hate the natives, Sturdy not excepted."

And it was therefore no wonder that Mr. Sturdy deserted him on the ground that the Swami had not lived the life of an ascetic in the West. Miss Nobles's interest, too, ended with the Swami's death. The Swami passed away on 4th July, 1902, and Miss Noble left the fold a fortnight thereafter ! Had not Goodwin predeceased the Swami, he, too, perhaps would have followed suit. The Sevier couple had grown almost a filial affection for the Swami, and they settled down at Almora. But Captain Sevier died in 1900, leaving his partner to continue for a while in their Almora hermitage, known as "Advaita Ashrama "

We now leave England and turn our attention to France and Germany.

The study of Sanskrit from philological point of the view

developed both in France and Germany from early Nineteenth century. Burnouf who held the relevant chair in the Paris University, edited and translated the Bhagvat Gita and Buddhist classics. He was only the first European to study the Zend language of the old Persian Cuneiform inscriptions.

His compeer in the Berlin University was Franz Bopp who first developed the scientific principles of Indo-European philology. A chair with Professor Brockhaus was also founded in the Leipzig University the alma mater of Max Muller.

Writing on the history and general reaction of these early philological enterprises, Max Muller gave an interesting picture. He wrote :

> "They would not have it, they would not believe that there could be any community of origin between the people of Athens and Rome, and the so-called Niggers of India. The classical scholars scouted the idea and I myself still remember the time, when I was a student at Leipzig and began to study Sanskrit, with what contempts any remark on Sanskrit or comparative grammar were treated by my teachers, men such as Gottfried, Hermann, Haupt, Westermann, Stallbaum, and others. No one ever was for a time to completely laughed down as Prefessor Bopp when he first published his comparative grammar of Sanskrit, Zend, Greek, Latin and Gothic, Dugald Stewart, rather than admit a relationship between Hindus and Scots, would rather believe that the whole Sanskrit language and the whole Sanskrit litrature—mind, a literature extending over three thousand years and larger than the ancient literature of either Greece or Rome—was a forgery of these why priests, the Brahmans."

The the niggers of India, a dependency of the West, had a glorious past and a noble literature and a splendid philosophy was unthinkable to a section of even the best Western minds. When the views of the intellectuals were so uncharitable, the feeling down the ladder could very well be imagined. But the consensus of opinion of the intellectuals did not beguile the philosophers. Both Schopenhaur and Kant were great lovers of the Upanishads, and Schopenhaur's eulogy of this philosophy is an outspoken expression of a noble soul. He wrote :

"The Upanishads are a solace in my life, and they will be a solace in my death."

By the time the Swami returned to India in 1897, the Indian National Congress had a few more sessions. The petitioning to and, woeing of the rulers, continued. The Congress, however, represented merely a vocal section of the educated class of the country. It had no touch with the dumb millions, the rank and file, outside the limited group. The organisers of the Congress were self-appointed representatives of the "Daridra-Narayans". The inevitable results of the method in which the Congress worked were as clear as day light to the Swami, It might bring a few crumbs in the begging bowl, but it would not change the lot of the beggar-gods. They would remain where they were. No one thought of them, neither the government nor its critics. All were in the same beat insofar as the lowly, the down-trodden were concerned. Men at the top merely wanted a little power for themselves. What did it matter to the country as a whole whether they get it or not ?

The reconstruction work lay not at the top but at the bottom. And, that work was 'Man-making'—the making of Man, the making of a solid foundation of the Indian national structure.

Asked whether he has given any attention to the Indian National Congress movement the Swami said :

"I cannot claim to have given much; my work is in another part of the field. But I regard the movement as significant, and heartily wish it success. . . .It will certainly end in the working out of India's homogeneity, in her acquiring what we may call democratic ideas. . . . . Education is coming, and compulsory education will follow. The immense power of our people must be utilized. India's potentialities are great and will be called forth."

The supplicatory programme of the Congress fell far short of the aspirations of the patriots who looked for a more radical change. This ardent, resolute, and progressive section of the Congress was greatly inspired by the oratory and writings of the Swami. His influence covered most effectually the three provinces, namely, the Punjab, Maharashtra and Bengal. The resulting force

found expression in the Trio-leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai of the Punjab, Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra and Bipinchandra Pal of Bengal, commonly known as "Lal-Bal-Pal." From inside the Congress fold they fought for a re-orientation of its policy. But the organisation was slow if not reluctant, to move away from its original orbit. The Surat Congress of 1907 saw a permanent breach between the reactionary and the progressive sections It paved the way for a country-wide terrorist movement in which Bengal made the greatest contribution.

The Swami firmly believed that man-making must be made the foundation of any organisation that aimed at the country's welfare. It must start at the bottom. To begin work at the top was like building a mausoleum without a foundation. He thus categorically set down his aims in his "My Life and Mission." :

> "Well then, my plans are, therefore, to reach these masses of India. Suppose you start schools all over India "for the poor, still you cannot educate them. How can you ? The boy of four years would better go to the plough or to work, than to your school. . . . . But if the mountain does not go to Mohammed, then Mohammed can come to the mountain. . . . There are hundreds and thousands of monks educating the people in the spiritual plane; why not let these men do the same work in the intellectual plane ?"

The Swami was, therefore, intent on producing a new type of sannyasi who would sacrifice everything for carrying out this door-to-door missionary work. They would become the 'sappers and miners' of the army of religion. And, as a visionary, he was perfectly confident that he would be able to collect readily a sufficient number of devoted workers for the cause.

Writing to Dewanji Shahib from Chicago in January, 1894, he expressed his hopes thus :

> "I am born to organise these youngmen (who have stood as bulwarks against the surging waves of materialism and luxury of the day); nay, hundreds more in every city are ready to join me; and I want to send them rolling like irresistible waves over India, bringing comfort, morality, religion, education to the doors of the meanest and the most down-trodden. And this

I will do or die."

And it was his idea that this new type of monks should make a small beginning, living in a modest form of monastery. Such monastery should be erected in that locality of the city where the poorest and the most downtrodden live. A cottage built of clay and straw and a hall made of the same materials are the only structure necessary. It will of course represent the poorest single unit. The Math or monastery should consist of a temple and an educational centre. In this centre teachers and preachers would be trained for carrying both religion and ways of life to each other.

Welfare of the masses was to be the only aim of the mission, and it was meant to bring about a radical change in social, political, and humanitarian spheres. But this change could never be effected by merely assailing the ancient rules and age-old order. His views on this point were recorded thus by his disciples in February/March, 1897 :

> "On the subject of how he would work in future in this country, Swamiji said that day that starting two centres, one in Madras and another in Calcutta, he would rear up a new type of sannyasi for the good of all men in all its phases. He further said that by a destructive method no progress either for the society or for the country could be achieved. In all ages and time progress has been effected by the constructive process, that is, by giving a new mould to old methods and customs. Every religious preacher in India, during the past ages, worked in that line. Only the religion of Bhagavan Buddha was destructive. Hence that religion has been extirpated from India."

The motto of this new type of monks would be "Atmano Moksharthong Jagadhitaya Cha" meaning that they would work for their personal salvation through the welfare of the world. And, their duty would be to educate only. There was no other way of man-making. It is not only the monks that would carry out this missionary work, but the laity, too, would join them. All of them would however be duly trained for the purpose. In replacement of Buddha's doctrine of "work and worship", his

message to his disciples was "work is worship."

On the question of education on which man-making is based, his views are recorded as follows :

> "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library."

This, in a nutshell, is the foundation on which the Ramakrishna Order was based. The constitution of the Order was laid down by the Swami. He himself led the first batch of the new type of monks to serve plague-stricken Calcutta, giving an indication how he wished the mission to work and touch the heart of the people It was expected to preach with positive work and not through some empty words. And, he made his mind perfectly clear in his discussions with a disciple in 1897 as recorded in Conversations and dialogues."

This visionary monk saw that his net work would spread out and cover the whole of India He wrote to Akhandananda in July 1897 :

> "When in every district there will be a Math on the model of our Math in Calcutta, then will my heart's desire be fulfilled. Let not the work of preaching, too, be at a stand-still, and greater even than preaching is the work of imparting education."

In carrying out this plan to perfection, he relied more on his children than on his brother disciples. And, he said "Obedience, readiness, and love for the cause—if you have these three, nothing can hold you back."

What, then, has caused the hold-up ?

The blue-print of the "Ramakrishna Prachar (Preaching)" or the Ramakrishna Mission was prepared on 1st May, 1897, at the house of Balaram Bose in Baghbazar, Calcutta. The Swami was the architect.

A mixed meeting of monk and lay disciples of Shree Ramakrishna was arranged that memorable afternoon. In the inaugural speech at the meeting the Swami said :

> "The conviction has grown in my mind after all my travels in various lands that no great cause can succeed without an organisation. In a country like ours, however, it does not seem quite practicable to me to start an organisation at once with a democratic basic or work by general voting. . . . For this reason it is necessary to have a dictator for this society.
> "Let the association be named after him, in whose name, indeed, we have embraced the monastic life . . . ."

At the second meeting on 5th May, the aims, working methods and duties of the association were after discussion, finalized as follows :

> "The aim of the association is to preach the truths which Sree Ramakrishna has, for the good of humanity, preached and demonstrated by practical application in his own life, and to help others to put these truths into practice in their lives for their temporal, means and spiritual advancement."

In his message Shree Ramakrishna stressed that, underlying the different religious forms of the world, there existed an eternal universal religion. To work out its truth in practice, he inaugurated a movement for the establishment of fellowship among the followers of different religions. It naturally followed therefore, that the duty of this newly formed association, named after the saint, was to conduct "in the right spirit" the activities of the movement of which the saint was the father.

The association formulated its metood of work on the following lines;

Its primary burden of duty was to train such men as could, in their turn, educate the masses. The aim of the education was to impart knowledge of humanities and sciences for their overall welfare, both material and spiritual.

Secondly, it was agreed that the association would provide and encourage arts and industries.

Thirdly, it would undertake to introduce and spread generally

the Vedantic and other-religious ideas in elucidation of the life of Shree Ramakrishna.

Its work was also to be shared between two departments, one to work for India and the other for foreign countries. The Indian work Department would be responsible for establishing Maths and Ashramas for the training of monks of the Order and also be house-holder devotees. On completion of this training, they would devote themselves to educate the masses by going about from one province to another.

The Foreign Work Department would send abroad trained members of the Order's to bring about a closer relation and better understanding between the Ashramas established in India with these established in foreign lands. It would also establish new centres.

The Swami became the first General President of association. Swami Brahmananda was elected the President of the Calcutta centre with Swami Jogananda as his assistant. The secretariat of the association was manned by some house-holder disciples. Until the Swami left again for the West in 1899, he generally used to attend the weekly meetings of the association held on Sundays.

The however, is not the beginning of the Ramakrishna Order. It merely represents the earliest thought on the care for a methodical growth of the sapling that germinated earlier.

Actually the seed was sown in the Cossipore garden house; 1886. Before he passed away, Shree Ramakrishna initiated eleven monk disciples and perhaps a house-holder devotee into his Order and gave them ochre robes, each apiece. The Swami headed the list of the monk disciples. The first Math of the Order, therefore, started in that garden house in 1886.

This monastery, consisting of a dilapitated rented house at 80 Cossipore Road in the suburbs of Calcutta, was unique in one sense. For the first time in India cultured and educated youngmen in a body joined a religious Order. For the first time, they, in a body, devoted themselves entirely to a form of spiritual discipline and also to work together for attaining self-realization.

The two ardent house-holder disciplies of Shree Ramakrishna, Surendranath Mitra and Balaram Bose, offered to meet the expenses of the monastery. But the doles were loan and irregular, largely by force of circumstances. The monks carried no reserves. As a result, their existence at times became precarious. In fact, they

frequently faced starvation. Clothing was niggardly; there was only one piece of robe which was shared by all. Any one going out of doors was using it. Yet undaunted those young monks continued to carry out their spiritual pursuit. They starved but never begged. But the situation changed completely when both benefactors died, in quick succession, in April-May, 1890.

The first Math or monastery of the order was removed from Cossipore to a rented house at Alambazar, a neighbouring area, in November 1891. There it stood in a poor condition for about seven years. When the blueprint of the Ramakrishna Association was finalized in 1897, the Swami looked for a suitable site for the Math. Eventually he selected seven acres of land at Belur near Bally in Howrah right on the Ganges, and the sale agreement was drawn up on February 3, 1898. It was bought with Miss Muller's donation of Rs. 39,000.

When this plot of land was acquired, it was considered desirable to remove the Alambazar Math to a place close to it. Moreover, the great earthquake of 1897 had rendered the building of the Math precarious, consequently it was removed to Nilambar Mukherjee's garden house at Belur on 13th February, 1898 The final move to a Shrine constructed on the selected plot of land was made on 2nd January, 1899. There it stood for well over three decades until the present great temple, dedicated to Shree Ramakrishna, was built.

Not only was the original Belur shrine built by the generous donation of Mrs. Ole Bull, but an endowment for the monstery was also provided by it. She must therefore be remembered with respect and affection by those who love the Association She provided the vital sunshine and essential nourishment to the sapling of the Ramakrishna Order.

But things had to wait before the great mausoleum designed to commemorate the saint was built The foundation stone was laid by Swami Shibananda, the then President of the Ramakrishna Order on 13th March, 1929. But adequate funds to undertake the great project was nowhere in sight. It came ultimately in 1934 in the form of a princely donation by another American woman, a Miss Helen F. Rubel. The gift covered a very large proportion of the colossal cost of eight lakhs, even though the materials were purchased at concessional rate. Currently this stupendous structure must be valued at many times its pre-war concessional cost.

A combination of Rajput and Moghul style of architecture carved in Chunar pink stone, the beautiful mausoleum was consecrated in 1938 But whether the saint or the Swami, had they been alive to see it, would have been pleased with this show-place was a different matter. Was it not the Swami's ardent desire that this Math would become a living centre of learning and 'Sadhana', and not a dead museum ?

At Madras a small beginning was made in March 1897 with Swami Ramakrishnananda at the helm. But the Math's financial position became so precarious in six months time that the Swami suggested its removal to Ramnad where it could survive under the direct patronage of the Maharaja, a devotee Fortunately, however, the Math gradually eked out its existence with local help and in the course of half a century, a strong network has covered the whole of Madras, Andhra, Kerala and Mysore states. The number of centres by 1957 rose to 23 and by 1965 to 26.

From its very inception the Ramakrishna Association had necessarily a dual character. This duality ensued from the inherent distinction between the Math and the Mission. Though they belong to the same Order, their entities are different.

While the Maths have nothing to do with worldly affairs, social activity is the life of the Missions. The monks do their meditation, their 'tapasya', in the Maths for the purpose of self-realization, away from the madding crowd. The Mission, on the other hand, is the front through which both the monks and the house-holder devotees contact the world. It is the agency through which all social activities and welfare work are carried out. The Missions run hospitals, schools, and relief projects, and conduct cultural affairs and religious lectures and preaching.

The original motto of the Association, as dictated by the Swami, was "Work is worship" as against Buddhists' motto of "Work and worship". But the Associations' motto has sustained quite an appreciable change over the last half-century. Today, monks have greater personal freedom. They can either do some social work or can abandon it altogether.

On principle the Maths are run or should be run, only with devotional offerings of the devotees. But the missions got their funds from various sources including public and Government donations and revenues accrued from commercial transactions. But in regard to these principles there has always been a mix-up. The

confusion does not lie only in respect of the sources of revenue but also concerning the respective spheres of activity. Moreover, from almost the begining the Maths have been referred to as missions and *vice versa*. And, this indiscriminate use of the terms still continues.

On top of this, there are numerous institutions all over the country carrying the names of Shree Ramakrishna, Shree Sharada Devi (consort of the saint), and the Swami without any affiliation to the Ramakrishna Math or Mission. The trio is indiscriminately used as a trade name. In some cases, these unattached institutions are run by some ex-monks of the Ramakrishna Order and thus it makes the confusion of the public worse confounded.

As the father of the Math and the Mission, the Swami drafted rules for the guidance of both. The rules for the Mission were somewhat scrappy, but these for the Math were very elaborate. These are known as 'The Belur Math Rules' and the monks of the Order are expected to abide by them religiously. To the Swami the Math was apparently the highest sanctuary where members of the Order could achieve perfection The Mission perhaps was a field where ample training in the Vedanta in practical life gave one an access to the world of the Math. The two together forms a complete unit, one serving as complementary to the other.

'The Belur Math Rules' are exhaustive and they are still considered as imperative and binding to the entire organisation. Leaving out therefore those of these rules which have little significance to the public, it is important to know others to have an insight into the organisation. They will give a clear indication of what the Order, particularly the Math, stands for :

(1) The Math is established to work out one's own liberation, and to train oneself to do good to the world in every way, along the lines laid down by Bhagavan Shree Ramakrishna.
(2) Such Maths must be formed all over the world. In some countries only spirituality is needed in others some amount of material comfort is extremely necessary.
(3) The Math will not pay much attention to social reforms.
(4) The Math on no account be reduced to a Thakurbai (a here temple) of the babaji In other words, the Order will not succumb to the inactivity and insipidity born

out of traditional devotionalism.

Incorporated in these rules is the chief vow of the members of the Order. It is this, every single person should be helped to attain the right to 'Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha' meaning in that order virtue, 'wealth, legitimate enjoyment and spiritual liberation. According to the Swami, the root of all misery in India lies in the wide gulf between the lower and upper classes.' The difference will have to be removed if we want to stand on our own feet. But this class distinction is not the same as caste distinction, and they do not necessarily reciprocate The object of the Order is therefore not to destroy cast distinction, but to equalize the distinction of privileges. Political sagacity can hardly achieve this, since politics is nothing but a struggle between the privileged and the non-privileged classes; and, all struggles merely end in bitterness.

To achieve this equalization, preachers must be sent to all places to give the masses education and religious teaching. And education duly conceived and imparted, is the only thing which can bring about the desired result.

To organisation of the Math was legalised by a Debottar Trust Deed executed on January 30 and registered on February 6, 1901. The trustees comprised to eleven direct disciples of Shree Ramakrishna mentioned in the appendix. From among themselves they were to elect a President who would hold office for a period of two years. Swami Brahmananda was elected the first President on February 12, 1901. Apparently, the Swami was not interested in this office; he was more eagar to give the organisation a proper shape from outside.

The President is the supreme head of the Order. He is the spiritual preceptor of the monks and novices and also of the householder devotees. Although the original intention was to limit the tenure of this highest office to a period of two years, an extention of the term seemed desirable in the long-run. It was more so in the case of the first President not only for his unequalled spiritual genius, but also for his extraordinary administrative ability. But for his able care, the baby organisation would not have become healthy and steady. So the first President continued to hold the reins upto 10th April, 1922, on which date he passed away.

The next three Presidents were also direct disciples of Shree Ramakrishna and their successive tenure ended about mid-1938.

Then came the second generation of Presidents as they were disciples of these monks who were directly initiated by the saint. The present President, Swami Madhabananda is eighth in the list.

The Secretaryship of the Math-President is the next exalted office In fact, it is the other name for vice-presidentship. A lift to the supreme position from this stepping stone in course of time follows as a corollary.

Although the organisation of the Math was legalised in 1901 during the Swami's lifetime, the Mission was not separated and legalised until 1909. The Memorandum of Association of the Mission was based on the brief rules drafted by the Swami. Eight of the Belur Math Trustees were its promoters. To understand its aim and its working, it is necessary to examine the essentials of its objective as included in this document. They are :

(1) To impart and promote the study of the Vedanta and its principles as pronounced by Shree Ramakrishna and practically illustrated by his own life, and comparative theology in its widest form.
(2) To impart and promote the study of Arts, Sciences and Industries.
(3) To carry on educational work among the masses.
(4) To establish, maintain, carry on and assist schools, colleges, orphanages, workshops, laboratories, hospitals, dispensaries, houses for infirm, the invalid and afflicted, famine relief works, and other educational and charitable works and institutions of a like nature.
(5) To print and publish and to sell or distribute gratuiously or otherwise journals, periodicals, books or leaflets that the Association may think desirable for the promotion of its objects.
(6) To incorporate any institutions, societies or associations having objects wholly or in part similar to any of these of the Association, and cooperate with any person or persons in aid of such objects.

The Mission may, therefore, be called the Service Department of the Order. Its sole aim is to do welfare work for the masses.

The number of Maths and Missions established over these sixty odd years is imposing. In 1965, it stands as follows ; Math

Centre · 64 Mission Centre : 71.

Out of these 135, 98 are established in India and the balance 37 outside. Area-wise they are distributed in the following manner:

	Mission	*Math*
(*Within India*)		
West Bengal	22	14
Assam	4	1
Bihar	6	1
Orissa	2	2
Uttar Pradesh	6	7
Delhi	1	—
Punjab	1	—
Rajasthan	1	—
Gujarat	—	1
Maharashtra	1	2
Madras	8	4
Andhra	2	1
Kerala	1	5
Mysore	1	4
(*Outside India*)		
E. Pakistan	8	9
Burma	2	—
France	1	—
Ceylon	1	—
Malaysia	1	—
Fiji	1	—
Mauritius	1	—
Switzerland	—	1
England	—	1
Argentina	—	1
U.S.A.	—	10
	71	64

The total number of monks and novices has now touched 700, and they come mostly from Bengal and South India. Perhaps monks, novices and centres of the Order have grown proportionately in each area with the apparent exception of Uttar Pradesh. Although there is a large number of Maths and Missions in this

state, it has hardly produced any monk. There is also a sprinkling of monks from Orissa, Andhra and Maharashtra.

The exact number of house-holder devotees is difficult to eliminate. Perhaps it varies with changes in the economic and political climate of the country.—Recognition of Shree Ramakrishna as a spiritual guide among any community other than the Hindus is appreciably lacking. Even to the average educated Hindus what Shree Ramakrishna stands for is not clear. He is generally regarded just as another 'sadhaka' or worshipper of Kali, and a mystic like saint Ramaprasad who, too, was born in Bengal about a century earlier.

To the average Hindu the Mission or the Math (he does not know the distinction either) is nothing more than a—'Thakurbari', despite the Swami's ardent desire to prevent the growth of such an undesirable notion. The 'person' has gradually superseded the ideas he preached, and it is tending to end in a lip-deep homage to be paid to 'The Thakur and the Mother.' Their joint-photograph, generally coloured, commands a better sale now than ever. The taxi-drivers' mentality, that an accident will be avoided if this photo is kept in the vehicle, rules even the educated mind.

As the greatest interpreter of Shree Ramakrishna the Swami must have foreseen it clearly that such a development was inevitable unless the saint's ideals were carried into practice. The Missions would change to prayerhalls or temples and the monks would become toll collectors and priests. Therefore, his was a clarion call, in the name of the saint, to his countrymen to throw themselves into 'Karma-yoga' or action. To his brother-monks his instructions were to give up the idea of personal salvation as a recluse which was so long dominating the mental sphere of Indian monks. Instead, he asked them to follow the motto of 'work is worship' and he asserted that self-realization would come that way. From the Vedanta in practical life as worked in the Mission, the monk would soon move to the world of the Vedanta in spiritual life in the Math.

But the Swami's message must not be mistaken for humanism, the ruling religious sentiment of the West. Humanism induces social services as a cultural pattern. There it is guided by economic sanctions and social moral codes. But the Swami's message represents the doctrine of the Vedanta in which no distinction is made between God and His creation, the two are considered

identical. While social service in the West is a service rendered to 'others', there is no question of 'helping others' in the Ramakrishna Mission work. Here through work the worker is merely helping himself and is paving his way to self-realization.

The seed sown by Shree Ramakrishna in 1886 germinated into a sapling under the fostering care of the Swami till 1902 and then grew into a fine tree. Nurtured by Swami Brahmananda, a selfless monk of the highest calibre, 'who could rule a kingdom,' it struck its roots deep into the soil of India during the first twenty-two years of its life. It was a noble gift that the Ramakrishna Mission gave to India, particulary to Bengal. It shaped a moral, vigorous and rebellious Bengal which in its turn, inspired the whole of India.

Any educated Bengalee now in or beyond his fifties can vividly recollect how Bengal in these days reacted to the Order's ideals. With what reverence and obeisance the new light was hailed. How the spirit of humility in service and that of revolt against injustice were blended into one in Bengalee character! The youth of Bengal in their teens were prepared for any sacrifice to uphold the ideals preached by the Swami. In fact, the stupendous sacrifice they made, amazed India and the world.

Swami Vivekananda did not beat about the bush. His message was clear. "Go from village to village" he exhorted the youngmen of India, "from one portion of the country to another and preach this message of fearlessness to all from the Brahmin to the Chandala. Tell each and all that infinite power resides within them, that they are sharers of immortal bliss. Thus rouse up the 'Rajas' or Vigour of action in them—make them fit for the struggle of existence, and then speak to them about salvation."

The ideals he preached before his disciples were 'not mukti but renunciation; not self-realization but self-abandonment.' But his insistence on service to humanity was considered by his brother-disciples as a perversion born out of Western influence and his negation of the orthodox theory of personal-salvation as something which could have never been sanctioned by Shree Ramakrishna. Apparently, therefore, the Ramakrishna Order was born with a congenital defect.

But Swami Brahmananda, the first caretaker, was a giant. He himself might have a leaning towards personal salvation in the

traditional way, but he was equal to the trust and task reposed on him by the Swami. The positive work of man-making as the aim of the Order was not lost sight of during his stewardship. It is well-known that he was strongly of the opinion that the progress of the individual was more important than the expansion of the organisation. All round education, the declared means of man-making got the pride of place, particularly during the second half of his tenure

The Swami's views on the problem of rejuvinating India were generally shared by the first-President. He, too, did not believe in any political manoeuver, and his sincerity was tested sooner than he imagined. In 1905, three years after the passing away of the Swami, Bengal was partitioned by Lord Curzon against the will of the people. The resultant political fight between the Government and the people posed a great problem for the Order.

During the bitter struggle that followed over the next six years, the Order found itself on the horns of a dilemma. The countrymen fighting against the partition wanted the Order to join hands with them, and the Government, too, solicited its support. Swami Brahmananda stuck to the principles enunciated by the Swami that politics was not his game. The Order, therefore, kept aloof from the struggle, joining neither the people nor the Government. As a result, the Order lost considerable popularity in the land of its birth. But this loss was partly made good when it whole-heartedly joined the 'Swadeshi' movement, a direct off-shoot of the main struggle. It made people-realize that the Order took its former decision merely on principle and not out of fear. The 'Swadeshi' movement had two objects in view; first, the boycott of foreign goods and, second, manufacture and use of indigenous products. It was a highly constructive movement launched for the benefit of the masses.

The revolutionary movement in Bengal came in the wake of partition. Shree Aurobinda, the mystic saint of Pondichery and Sister Nivedita both were in the Executive Committee of this revolutionary party. It had its affiliation with Bal Gangadhar Tilak's 'Secret revolutionary society' organised in Maharashtra. Sister Nivedita had to leave the Order for her association with active politics. Yet the Order remained under surveillance. Government strongly suspected that it was a major recruiting ground and shelter for the Bengal revolutionaries. This suspicion

covered twelve years. During this period the activities of the Indian National Congress increased gradually, and the negative outlook of the nation, born out of non-violent non-co-operation, found its expression in various ways. The necessity for making a chaos in the political field made a waaton-sacrifice of the students, the young hopefuls of the nation. The call of the Swami's man-making religion was buried-under the tall and loud promises of professional politicians.

Yet the President kept the Order aloof from the arena of politics 'Swamiji did not start a revolution' said Swami Bhivananda. 'Had he known it would help India, he would surely have done so' he concluded. But revolution was one thing, and man-making was another. The Order refused to start or join any revolution, but unfortunately it also lost its original vigour and determination to carry out the Swami's ideals.

This loss was gradual and not abrupt. The foundation of the ornate and gorgeous temple dedicated to Shree Ramakrishna was laid at Belur in 1929. This perhaps represented the little rift within the lute. There was a clash of ideals. It is unlikely that all the selfless monks of the Order then agreed to such an ambitious and expensive scheme to glorify the Master. If glorification was needed, service to humanity and preaching of the saints's message were clearly the ways to that end. The saint despised wordly spendour; so did the Swami. In trying to crystalize their messages into costly and magnificent stones, the Order seems to have forgotton a simple truth that while ideals are immortal, ideals, however closely preserved, perish sooner or later. By forgetting this maxim, so soon after its Birth, the order merely proved that it was made of common olay.

That the Order was gradually-resiling from its original ideal became more and more pronounced as the Second World War progressed. India, particularly her Eastern zone, turned into a kingdom of the Devil. Avarice ran riot; moral values went by the board; and thousands of young hopefuls were ruined for lack of ideals. But amidst this darkness, there were no Belur missionaries to show one the way. The Order itself hibernated possibly in self-protection, while devastation went on all over the country, both physical and moral.

The lurid picture was complete with the unforgettable man-made famine of Bengal in 1943. It was the direct result of the

'scorched earth policy' followed by the British army during its retreat on the face of the advancing Indian National Army organised and led by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The famine killed millions like flies and, within a few months, Bengal lost more human beings than what the whole Western Europe did during the entire Second World War. Even at the modest estimate three million people lost their lives.

The mission came out of its hibernation and did some 'distress relief' work. But it is difficult to imagine that there were vigour and sincerity in it since the Mission, like the British Government, camouflaged this great calamity by sophistically describing it as 'distress.' And, what would have the Swami done if faced with a grievous disaster of this nature ?

In 1893, when the Belur land was just purchased the Swami found himself short of funds to carry out plague relief work in Calcutta. What did he say then ? "Why ?" said he "we shall sell, if necessary, the land which has just been purchased for the monastery. We are sannyasies; we must be ready to sleep under the trees and live on aims as we did before." But apparantly, in the course of some forty-five years, the Order has moved far away from the world in which monks could live on alms and sleep under trees. So no one dreamt of selling the Belur Math-structure !

How did this change come about ? It was by no means abrupt; it was gradual. It progressed directly with the gradual deviation from the original aims of the Order.

What were the basic purposes of the Association formed by the Swami ? The aims and method of the association and the Belur Math rules, all of which were laid down by the Swami, are absolutely clear on this point. These documents have stipulated that the monastery would become the training ground for the monks and also for the house-holders who offered themselves for service. These trained men would carry out 'door to door' service for the purpose of material and spiritual welfare of the masses.

In whatever scheme was drafted, the masses of the Daridra-narayan took the pride of place. It was the living faith, the very care of the Swami's realisation that India lived or died with her poor and downtrodden masses. The enormous gulf between the upper and the lower classes in India would have to be made up by

raising the down-trodden. Writing to Swami Akhandananda from California in February, 1900, he said :

"The starting of a centre at Bhagalpore that you have written about is no doubt a good idea-enlightening the schoolboys and things of that sort. But our Mission is for the destitute, the poor, and the illiterate peasantry and labouring classes, and, if after everything had been done for them first, there is spare time, then only for the gentry."

The Swami has expressed the same sentiment times without number "I care more to preach religion to them than to the high and rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor. I love the poor." is one of his oft-quoted sayings. This conviction was so deep in him that it was his categorical view, collected by Swami Suddananda, that the decline of any religious order would set in instantly it began to favour the rich. It was a prophetic warning since impudently ignored by the Order.

The Swami's ideals changed slowly and imperceptibly over the last half a century or so. This deflection is partly due to the original difference between the Swami and his brother-disciples. But much perhaps is accounted for by the very worthy saying of Swami Brahmananda which reads : "It is extremely difficult to work and keep the head cool. Detachment and renunciation are absolutely necessary; otherwise you sink down."

If work without detachment spoils a house-holder, it also equally spoils a monk.

But whatever might have been the reasons, the emphasis in Mission work has gradually moved from rural to urban centres, from hermitages to places, from positive to negative action, from national to international pattern. from hard work to light engagements, and to crown all, from service to cultural activities. Through the wide windows of dance, drama and music of the luxurious places of culture, the monks are fast developing into a band of 'cultural leaders' interested in the progress of humanity and in world peace instead of becoming 'the sappers and miners' of the army of religion.

This tendency has grown very appreciably after India has got her independence in 1947. Whatever scruples the Order had in

the past to accept Government money for its work have now completely disappeared. More and more Government grants, both recurring and non-recurring, are coming in. Not only have these made the Order exceedingly solvent, but Government support has made it politically and socially powerful. In fact, the table has turned completely. While in early twenties, associates of the Order were political suspects, now in mid-century they are considered cultural, intellectual and religious magnates.

Shree Ramakrishna said 'Religion is not for empty bellies.' He also said to the Swami, 'You will bring spiritual consciousness to men, and assuage the misery of the humble and the poor.' And inspired by the Master, the Swami expressed his qualms about money for Math and Mission buildings. He said :

> "Sometimes I think within myself; what is the good of building monasteries and so forth ? Why not sell them and distribute the money among the poor, indigent Narayans ? What homes should we care for we who have made the tree our shelter ? Alas how can we have the heart to put a morsel into our mouths, when our countrymen have not enough wherewith to feed or cloth themselves ?"

The perhaps is an old, gloomy picture, inconsistent with the bright and prosperous post-independence condition of the Swami's 'Daridra-Narayan.' Else, how could 'service' give place to 'culture,' a word which is conspicuous by its absence in what the Swami put down as the aims and the duties of the Association he formed ? How could a 'Culture Palace' be constructed and equipped in Calcutta and styled as "The Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture" at an enormous cost of 77 lakhs ? As much as 56 lakhs of this enormous have come from the Central and State Government coffers; about 12 lakhs have been donated by the Industrialists and commercial houses. Public donation is insignificant. There is still perhaps a little deficit in the construction and equipment costs to be made up.

These figures tell their own story. The subvention is a deadweight of obligation to the Order. He who pays the piper calls the tune; the adage is universally true.

In commercial phraseology, the Government have launched a cultural enterprise with themselves as a major share-holder,

trading with the goodwill of the house of Shree Ramakrishna. The UNESCO have purchased a number of shares, and have now become a miner partner. The commodity offered for sale is of course 'culture' which to an average man conjures up in idea so grand, so noble and so nebulous that he cannot give it a concrete shape To the initiated, it simply means the ways of life followed by a group or society. These ways have both written and unwritten laws; religious beliefs, ideals, arts, technology and their pots and pans. The members of the group or society are bound together by an emotion which may be described as 'belonging.'

To make things look exceedingly noble and highly refined, the house of Shree Ramakrishna have pressed into service a basket-ful of jargons, cliches, hackneyed phrases and jingling of words like 'world culture,' 'cultural pattern,' 'cultural pluralism' 'renewed and broader humanism.' 'cultural leaders,' 'forward trend in other culture' and the like In the dark abyss of this forest of culture, it is difficult to find the way out.

However, the tune played by the piper speaks of "international understanding and co-operation and peaceful co-existence" and 'progress of humanity and world peace' and similar hackneyed phrases. It is the new song for which the piper has been paid. Apparently the Swami has to wait with his obsolete idea of 'man-making' and his 'Daridra-Narayan' for a morsel of food. The world has meantime progressed and so has the Order. The Swami said that strength was the only thing that counted. 'Strength-strength-strength that is what the Upanishads give you.' But unfortunately he did not know that Government-aided cultural slogans were stronger. And he could not foresee that his children would be proud to record in their annual reports the august visits to the Institute of reputed dancers and film-stars! But why this sarcasm they would ask in injured innocence. Did not even Shree Ramakrishna rejoice in the company of Girish Chandra Ghosh, the reputed dramatist and actor?

The President of the Institution Dr. Radhakrishnan, has in a humerous vein called it 'a multipurpose scheme, a miniature welfare state.' Perhaps for a moment he saw the skeleton in the cupboard! For while the Order now believes that a dose of the cultural drug is a panacea for all ills, the President vainly pointed to 'the ideal of contemplation perfected by Shree Ramakrishna and the ideal of service stressed by Swami Vivekananda' are the

right means of removing the conflicts and contradictions of life faced by mankind.

There is no doubt that this cultural palace is a miniature welfare state It is perhaps the same wonderland in which young Alice one day lost herself ! The lecture hall provides comfortable accommodation to the stately car-owners of the city who take a weekly dose of the Upanishad or the Gita to drive away whatever ill they incur knowingly or unknowingly Members come to a refreshing course of snacks and tea with visiting luminaries, both foreign and native The international hotel provides for elaborate exhibition of culminary art, the aroma of good food alluring the passers-by Central Government Ministers use the luxurious appartments for their stay in the city Day scholars throng to have a subsidised good meal for a song Half a dozen septuagenarians struggle to digest a heavy dose of Sankhya or Vedanta philosophy read with teachers who delineate on philology and grammar

Occasional musical soiree, dance, drama and film shows amuse the joy-hunters An apology for a museum and art gallery draw polite applause from those who are dragged to them Lectures, classes, discourses, study circles, seminars and symposia always cater amusement for a handful of idlers while the participants continue their mock fight

But it is a mistake to think that the palace abounds in only mundane things Up on the roof there is meditation hall intended for individual spiritual pursuits !

The ever-busy cultural world, which is the last word of the Order, continues its forceful existence inside the palace while Shree Ramakrishna sits aside under the hanging Verandah and the begger-gods of the Swami die on the adjacent foot-paths !

The tree is withering, it has developed a canker

26

VIVEKANANDA'S FAITH AND THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION

MONONIT SEN

It is common knowledge that Swami Vivekananda was vehemently opposed to all forms of priestcraft, casteism and, above all, "samskara", all of which, in his opinion, were eating into the vitals of the nation and dwarfing its growth He condemned in no unmistakable terms all those trying to perpetuate these social evils He went so far as to advise his countrymen to shun the company of such people Regrettably, there has been no improvement in the position worth the name, even after so many years. The masses, as also a considerable section of the educated people, remain victims of priestcraft, superstition and prejudices Our Government, painfully conscious of these shortcomings in our national life, is making earnest endeavours to root out the evils that stand in the way of national integration and progress

The sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Mission are the trusted adherents of Vivekananda's articles of faith But strangely enough, they fight shy of giving adequate publicity to Swami Vivekananda's strong denunciation of priestcraft, casteism and "samaskara" lest the sympathy of the orthodox should be alienated, as there is every possibility of their susceptibilities being wounded The Mission holds classes almost daily in different parts of Calcutta and discourses are given on the *Gita* and the *Bhagavata*, but the holding of a single class for spreading Swami Vivekananda's message on the evils of priestcraft, casteism and "samskara", that

will ultimately lead to the all-round progress of the country, has never yet been heard of. Incidentally, it will be quite appropriate to reproduce an extract from Swami Vivekananda's famous lecture delivered at the World Parliament of Religions, Chicago. He said ". . . . the crying evil in the East is not religion—they have religion enough—but it is bread that the suffering millions of burning India cry out for with parched throats. They ask for bread but we give them stones. It is an insult to a starving people to offer them religion; it is an insult to a starving man to teach him metaphysics." Evidently, the present performance of the Ramakrisna Mission is suggestive of the fact that it is inclined more to the perpetuation rather than the eradication of the aforesaid social evils, so strongly deprecated by Swami Vivekananda which, *ipso facto*, does not also conform to the wishes of our Government. Also the gospel of Harmony of All Religions, so earnestly preached by both Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, following the example of Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen, is no more the concern of the Mission.

Every serious student of Vivekananda literature is equally aware how deeply he felt for the woeful plight of the half-clad, semi-starved, illiterate, down-trodden massess,—the perennial source of supply of articles of food, clothing and other luxuries to the indolent rich He considered himself a socialist and gave a clarion call to his followers and countrymen to shake off their lethargy and make the best of endeavours to instil into their minds a sense of awareness that they are also sons of God and have the same inherent right to share and enjoy equally with the rich the fruits of their toils and tears. Swami Vivekananda also fully realised that for national regeneration, mass education was an immediate and imperative necessity. He accordingly urged his followers with all emphasis to undertake this all-important work with a missionary zeal without delay.

In order to implement Swami Vivekananda's aforesaid message, one has to move about from village to village throughout the country, visiting every hamlet and its inmates and living on alms and spending the nights under a tree or in the court-yard of a hospitable house-holder, in the same manner as 'Sramanas' carried and spread Gautama Buddha's gospel to every nook and corner of the land.

But what we find today is that, the sannyasins of the

Ramakrishna Mission live luxuriously in magnificent palaces, built at fabulous cost, the envy of the richest of the rich, while hunger, disease, ignorance, lack of adequate shelter etc., stalk the land. They make a very poor show of social service by the free distribution of a few pounds of powdered milk or a few phials of medicine, which is nothing but the tiniest drop in the vast ocean of human sufferings. The few schools, opened in and around towns by Mission for imparting higher secondary education, are the despair of even the middle-class people The spread of primary education among the masses, the most pressing need of the hour, which entails prolonged stay in the remotest villages, devoid of all modern amenities of urban life, obviously finds no favour with them. A hotel de luxe is run by the Mission under the pseudonym of International Guest House, the finest example of the monastic mode of life of Vivekananda's conception ! On present indications, one wonders whether the Ramakrishna Mission is gradually drifting towards the establishment of another Papal State. Swami Vivekananda in his rare wisdom must have clearly foreseen these things among his disciples and as a note of warning he aptly observed, "Sitting in luxurious homes, surrounded by all the comforts of life and doling out a little amateur religion may be good for other lands. But India has a truer instinct She easily detects the mask " Of all persons, even Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose of hallowed memory was so much disgusted with the doings of the Ramakrishna Mission, that in exasperation he thus wrote in his Autobiography, "Vivekananda's teachings have been neglected by his own followers—by the Ramakrishna Mission which he had founded—and we are going to give effect to them "

Incidentally, a pertinent passage from Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen's writings, is recalled to my mind, in which he gave vent to his feelings more than eight decades ago, in relation to the activities of the Christian Missionaries in India. The aforesaid passage so closely portrays the picture of the present-day Ramakrishna Mission that it is worth reproduction. Thus wrote Brahmananda, "The bearers of the Cross to India have mostly diverted their zeal and energy into other fields. The School-master's vocation seems to have charms for many, and has allured a considerable number of Padris in the great cities into schools and colleges, where they are busy in preparing Hindu. Intellects for University examinations instead of training Hindu souls for

Christ's kingdom The Reverend Professor is always teaching Mathematics and History, neglecting the higher teaching for which he has been sent out How many secular agents there are in India who can teach secular things ! Why then should the valuable talents and energies of Christ's apostles and agents be wasted in such fields of work ? Let them go forth where Christ summons them and perform their legitimate duties to which he incessantly calls them The benighted millions, sunk in idolatory and superstition, in scepticism and worldliness, with hands uplifted are ever and a non-imploring spiritual ministration and counsel ! Will the missionary refuse them help ?"

To pay homage to Swami Vivekananda without proper appreciation and progagation of his teachings would be sheer hypocrisy If the sannyasins of the Mission are really sincere in doing honour to their illustrious Guru the only way open to them is to turn their immediate attention to the emancipation of the slumbering masses from all social evils and religious dogmas, which was so near and dear to his heart Will the sannyasins rise to the occasion ? The mere holding of celebrations with the display of selected passages from Swami Vivekananda's various speeches and writings, as also meetings addressed by V.I.P.'s, extolling his virtues, without any serious attempt to follow them up by acts and deeds, may have some temporary emotional effect, but will be of no material benefit to the people and the country

In conclusion, I would crave the indulgence of the readers for quoting another, a significant passage from Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen's lecture on "Religious and Social Reformation" delivered at Bombay. He said, "There is no want of reformers; there is only want of reform There is no want of eloquence or orations; there is only want of deeds There is no want of profession, but there is want of practice "

27

BRAHMO SAMAJ AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CHICAGO LECTURES

MONONIT SEN

Admittedly, Swami Vivekananda's lectures delivered at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, earned for him name and fame, and he became a world-figure overnight, so to speak It is an open secret that Vivekananda during his college-days became an initiated and active member of the Brahmo Samaj and had his initial lessons in social and religious matters from the leaders of the Samaj It is also specifically stated on page 21 of the book "History Of the Ramakrishna Math And Mission", that Narendra (Vivekananda) had some love for the Brahmo Samaj and agreed with the Brahmos in their denunciation of caste, polytheism, image—worship, the institution of the Guru and divine Incarnation, and their advocacy of freedom for women That was an impressionable age of Narendra, and whatever inspiration he imbibed from the social and religious teachings of the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj, left an indelible stamp on his youthful mind and that, consciously or unconsciously, he was unable to rid himself of those early impressions even on attainment of maturity as Swami Vivekananda, although he had occasions to disclaim it openly In order to press home my view-point I can do no better than place some of the passages from Vivekananda's Chicago lectures is against the sayings of the Brahma leaders and let the gentle readers from their own judgment on perusal There are also many other instances, specially in connexion with social

reformation and social reformers, where Swamiji re-echoed the same sentiments as expressed by the Brahmo leaders long ago. Besides, a careful perusal of the extract from Brahmananda's lecture on 'Faith' reproduced below clearly indicates that he imbued the idea of the motherhood of God as early as 1866, which, incidentally, counter the ceaseless propaganda of the followers of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, that the concept of the motherhood of God first dawned on Keshub after his meeting with Ramakrishna in March, 1875. The passages in question from Swamiji's Chicago lectures coupled with similar quotations from the Brahmo leaders are as follows :

"We accept all religions as true. . . . Sectarianism, bigotry and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilisation and sent whole nations to despair."—(Swamiji's Chicago Addresses —"Response to Welcome" on 11th September, 1893).

"I am a Hindu, I am sitting in my own little well and thinking that the whole world is my little well. The Christian sits in his little well and thinks the whole world is his well. The Mohammedan sits in his little well and thinks that is the whole world. I have to thank you of America for the great attempt you are making to break down the barriers of this world of ours."—(Swamiji's Chicago Addresses—"Why We Disagree" on 15th September, 1893).

"Let not our homage, however, be exclusively confined to any one of them, and withheld from others. We must honour all of them, unbiased by local influences, party feeling, or sectarian bigotry. It is the want of this Catholic spirit, it is the evil of awarding exclusive honour to particular prophets, that has filled the religious world with jealousies, hatred and sanguinary strife, and made their followers plunge the dagger of brutal animosity into each other's breast. In fact, it is this which has mainly organised sectarianism and multiplied hostile churches."—Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen" lecture on 'Great Man' on the 28 September, 1866.

You have today given effect to the teaching of our Shastras, that is, "the true religion which includes all religions.—We are Hindu still, and shall always be. . .

"The Hindu scriptures are not the only scriptures : Are there not other scriptures also ?. . . Our monotheism, therefore, stands

upon all Scriptures. . . . No, it was not the Christian missionary that drew our attention to the Bible, it was not the Mohammedan priests who showed us the excellent passages in the Koran, it was no Zorastrian who preached us to the greatness of his Zend-Avesta; but there was in our hearts the God of infinite reality, the source of inspiration of all the books, of the Bible, of the Koran, of the Zend-Avesta who drew our attention to His excellences as revealed in the record of the holy experience everywhere. . . God is infinite . . . . All the scriptures sing His glory; all the prophets in the heaven declare His majesty; all the martyrs have reddened the world with their blood in order that His Holiness might be known. God is the one infinite good, ... God is the one eternal and infinite, the inspirer of all human mankind. The path of our progress then lay toward allying ourselves, toward affiliating ourselves, with the faith and righteousness and the wisdom of all religions and all mankind."—(Speeches delivered by Protap Chunder Mozoomdar at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago, on the 11th and 13th September, 1893).

The Hindu does not want to live upon words and theories. If there are existences beyond the ordinary sensuous existence, he wants to come face to face with them. If there is a soul in him which is not matter, if there is an all-merciful universal soul, he will go to him direct. He must see Him, and that alone can destroy all doubts. So the best proof a Hindu sage gives about the soul, about God, is—'I have seen the soul, I have seen God.'—(Swamiji's paper on 'Hinduism' read at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago on the 19th September, 1893).

"He is within us, and He is ever near to us. Then let me feel it. Asks the student—asks the scholar—asks the man versed in all the theology of the world,—is his intellect enough to lead him to God ? No, all his Shaster, all his academic divinity will fail; these cannot make him realise his God. His God is no God to him,—his eyes see him not. He closes his eyes and tries to realise his God within him,—it is as dark within as without ! Man's knowledge is nothing,—the mere knowledge of God is nothing, if I cannot feel Him within the inmost receses of my heart, as a father, as a mother, as a friend,—my guide, my companion,—one in whom I live, and therefore, one whom I must love. Such a God is the true God, and yet knowledge cannot make man draw near to that God. I have recourse to my books. I go to my teachers

and my ministers. I enter into temples, or churches, or cathedrals, or masjeeds,—but I see not my God, I feel not my God,—my heart is vacant,—outside and inside, it is all emptiness, all shadow, all blank,—there is no living God ! I see my brethren around me, I see all the fowls of the air and the beasts of the wilderness, they live, it is true, I see all material objects; they are real to me. But what is it which, inspite of all my knowledge, prevents me from realising my God in the same way as I realise the material objects—the living beings—of this world ? The heart says, there is no faith. . . . . You may offer up your prayers day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, but without that faith it is all loss of words, waste of intelligence. Where do your prayers go to ? From an empty heart the words vanish. But if you have the real God before you, just as the idolator has a real idol before him, one word is enough it be. Unlettered, ignorant you may be, but one little word, one rude word, coming from the heart and addressed to the living God, revolutionises the whole life—converts the whole soul—makes man divine ! This is the sort of faith we must have in the living God."

(Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen's lecture on 'Faith' on 22nd March, 1868).

"The essential characteristics of ancient faith may be reduced to two simple truths—seeing God and hearing his word . . . . The ancient Rishis, we are told, held direct communion with God, and saw His glorious face. No expression is more frequently used in the Upanishads than the 'perception' of God (darshan). It is said that 'the wise fully see God', that He "manifests himself to His worshippers, and that He is grasped by the soul as a fruit is laid hold of by the hand." It appears that Hindu sages, not content with intellectual conceptions of the Almighty or abstract contemplation of certain Divine attributes, sought earnestly, and indeed successfully, to behold the Supreme Spirit directly and to apprehend Him as distinct and vivid Reality in their inner consciousness. The truly devout sat under the shade of their favourite tree on some high peak of the Himalayas, and saw the Lord above, around clear was the perception that they rejoiced and below as a 'burning fire.' Nay, so greatly in the presence of their God, ... We see men inspired by the direct influence of God. The Holy spirit of God, descended upon men's hearts, revolutionised their whole being, put in new thoughts, new ideas,

exalted conceptions and renovated energies, and in short transformed the whole life of those who received such inspiration in the most mysterious manner. There is no deep philosophy in the process; every thing, if we read the records, seems so simple and natural Man sees his maker and discourses with Him. The Fater sits by the side of His child and the child sees Him, and rejoices. Just as we see matter without any effort of reasoning, so the ancient prophets saw their God, and communed with Him face to face. The whole process is described as a matter of marvellous simplicity and sweetness which touches the inmost hearts. But the question is—is there any truth in all this ? Did the Rishis and prophets really see God ? Is it possible for man to see God as I see the magnificent pillars and the beautiful lights before me ? Is it possible to hear His voice as I hear external sounds ? Surely it is possible spiritually, but impossible physically, . . . When therefore we are told that in ancient times men saw God, we are to understand that they perceived a fire or a light or a human figure not with their outward eye or their imagination, but that they felt the nearness of the Holy Spirit and vividly realised his solemn presence. This, I believe, is the whole secret of perception of God. In this sense He is seen today, and can be seen more or less by every living man The process is miraculous and mysterious, yet natural and simple. Every child of God has direct access to Him and may see Him with his own eyes. Nay, it is possible for the greatest sinner, if he is penitent and has faith, to feel the nearness of God in this manner. I say this is quite possible even in this age of material civilization and be-setting rationalism. . . . What was possible before is possible today. Time cannot work a change in the nature of Him who changeth not though centuries roll away, nor in His dealings with mankind. He is what He was. If He revealed Himself to our forefathers, He will not, He cannot hide Himself today from our vision. To think otherwise argues absence of faith in the fixedness of the Divine economy."—(Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen's lecture on "Primitive Faith and Modern Speculations," on the 23rd January, 1872)

"Ye venerable Rishi and Devotees of ancient India ! at your holy feet, modern India lays her humble tribute of gratitude for this priceless legacy ! Gentlemen, was the God of our forefathers a mere metaphysical abstraction, a prolongation, as it were into the outward universe of men's intellectual consciousness ? Was

their Deity nothing but a thin air or a romantic fancy? I emphatically say, no. It was the reality of God-head that our ancestors sought and worshipped . . . . They never recognised an unreal divinity. . . . . They did not dream, but they saw. They imagined not, but they handled the Great Spirit. To them God was as "a fruit held in the clutches of the hand,"—Karatala nyasta amalakavat." . . .Not only did they see Him with the eyes of faith, but they also held him in their hearts. In the Rig Veda, the Lord is spoken of as a friend, a father and the most fatherly of fathers." —"Sakha, pita pitritama pitrinam," . . . . Nay, their conceptions rose higher still and even recognised the motherhood of God. The Deity is represented both as father and mother of mankind." Let none then say that the ancient Hindus worshipped an abstract Deity." (Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen's lecture on "Our Faith and Experience" in January, 1876).

"Much has been said of the common ground of religious unity. I am not going just now to venture my own theory. But if anyone here hopes that this unity will come by the triumph of any one of the religions and the destruction of the others to him I say: "Brother, yours is an impossible hope. Do I wish that the Christian would become Hindu? God forbid. Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid. . . . The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth."—(Swamiji's Chicago Addresses,—"Address at the Final Session" on the 27th September, 1893).

"But the future Church of India must be thoroughly national; it must be an essentially Indian Church. The future religion of the world I have described will be the common religion of all nations, but in each nation it will have an indigenous growth, and assume a distinctive and peculiar character. All mankind will unite in a universal church; at the same time, it will be adapted to the peculiar circumstance of each nation, and assume a national form. No country will borrow or mechanically imitate the religion of another country, but from the depths of the life of each nation its future Church will naturally grow up."—(Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen's lecture on "The Future Church" on the 23rd January, 1869).

"I am not indulging in abstractions, but I speak because I feel strongly on the subject. I would beseech you humbly to cast away at once and for ever the spirit of sectarianism. Let ministers of the various sects exchange their pulpits with each other. Let the brothers and sisters of one Church now and then go into another Church and shake hands with the utmost wormth and tenderness of heart with their brothers and sisters in that Church; then we shall find. . . . one grand universal Cathedral, where ten thousand voices of ten thousand nations shall commingle in the sweet and swelling chorus and proclaim the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man" (Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen's lecture on "Christ and Christianity", on May 28, 1870).

"We do not ask that the Christians should cease to call themselves Christians. Let the Christians remain Christians, the Mohammedans remain Mohammedans, the Hindus remain Hindus. But the each of them worship in his heart to purely, so spiritually, and in such a spirit of love that all men may be brethren and inspite of all differences of nationality and climate, they may recognise each other as members of that kingdom which their God will some day establish."—(Protap Chunder Mozoomdar's Lowell lectures" delivered at Baston).

"If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this. It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if any dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destraction of others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, inspite of resistance · "Help and not Fight", "Assimilation and not Destruction", "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension."—(Swamiji's Chicago Addresses,—"Address at the final session" on the 27th September, 1893).

"When all nations and countries will thus absorb each other's goodness and purity, then shall the inward kingdom of heaven be realised on earth, of which ancient prophets sang and predicted. All truth shall then be harmonised and reduced to a beautiful subjective synthesis in the life of humanity. No longer do you see jealousies and enmities dividing the world. The battle-cry is hushed and the sword of sectarian hate has found rest in the

sheath. No longer do we see scriptures arrayed against scriptures, churches, against churches, sects against sectors—endless groups of fighting zealots It is one undivided spirit-world, in which there is neither caste nor sect nor nationality. This is heaven indeed." (Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen's lecture on "We Apostles of the New Dispensation")

"Is it not, then our duty, I ask, and shall we not esteem it a privilege, to render unto prophets and great men the humble tribute of our gratitude and esteem ? The immense service they render to mankind, and the noble characteristics which distinguish them—their deep wisdom and invincible power, their rigid self-denial and fervent devotion, challenge the spontaneous gratitude and esteem of all men. To honour them is no meanness, no sycophancy; no sordid "Boswellism", no idolatrous "hero-worship", as some foolishly imagine. To honour them is to honour our benefactors, and to glorify the greatness of human nature, we cannot, we dare not, slight them. They are of universal interest and importance. Their lives, deserve our careful study; their greatness should excite our earnest aspiration. They are designed by Providence for our study and imitation. "Lives of great men all remind us, we can make our lives sublime;" nay, they stir up our best energies to attain that sublimity of which they afford living examples In precepts and doctrines there is indeed much to enlighten the mind; but what can more effectively quicken it than examples ? Life alone can give life, and, above all, the life of heaven—appointed prophets. It is what they have actually done that makes us understand the loftiness and sublimity which humanity is capable of, and impels us forcibly to attain that loftiness and sublimity. The world is vastly indebted to them; they are the glory, the pride of mankind, we boast of them, we naturally feel grateful to them. We thank Him, who sends them for our benefit, and whom as His servants and messengers, they in some measure reveal."—(Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen's lecture on "Great Men" on the 28th September, 1866).

Incidentally, I feel tempted to quote below certain passages having some bearing on the subject, from the speeches and writings of a few prominent men of Bengal. "And it was Keshub Chunder Sen who first taught us to revere the good and pious men of all ages and all countries."—(Lahore Address, November, 1897 by Dr. V. Roy of the Sadharan Brahmo

Essays on Religion had upset his first boyish theism and easy optimism which he had imbibed from the outer circles of the Brahmo Samaj. The arguments from causality and design were for him broken reeds to lean upon, and he was haunted by the problem of the Evil in Nature and Man which he, by no means, could reconcile with the goodness of an All-wise and All-Powerful Creator. A friend introduced him to the study of Hume's Scepticism and Herbert Spencer's of the Unknowable, and his unbelief gradually assumed the from of a settled philosophical scepticism

"His first emotional freshness and *naivete* were worn out. A certain dryness and incapacity for the old prayerful devotions, which he concealed under a *nonchalant* air of habitual mocking and scoffing, troubled his spirit. But music still stirred him as nothing else could, and gave him a weired unearthly sense of unseen realities which brought tears to his eyes.

"It was at this time that he came to me being brought by a common friend, the same who had introduced him to the study of Hume and Herbert Spencer. I had a nodding acquaintance with him before, but now he opened himself to me and spoke of his harassing doubts and his despair of reaching certitude about the Ultimate Reality. He asked for a course of Theistic philosophic reading suited to a beginner in his situation. I named some authorities, but the stock arguments of the Intuitionists and the Scotch common sense school only confirmed him in his unbelief. Besides, he did not appear to me to have sufficient patience for humdrum reading,—his faculty was to imbibe not so much from books as from living communion and personal experience. With him it was life kindling life and thought kindling thought.

"I felt deeply drawn towards him, for I now knew that he would grappel with difficulties in earnest.

"I gave him a course of readings in Shelley. Shelley's Hymn to the spirit of Intellectual Beauty, his pantheism of impersonal love and his vision of a glorified millennial humanity moved him as the arguments of the philosophers had failed to move him. The universe was no longer a mere lifeless, loveless mechanism. It contained a spiritual principle of unity.

"I spoke to him now of a higher unity than Shelley had conceived the unity of the Para Brahman as the Universal Reason. My own position at that time sought to fuse into one, three

essential elements, the pure monism of the Vedanta, the dialectics of the Absolute idea of Hegel and the Gospel of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity of the French Revolution. The principle of individuation was with me the principle of Evil. The Universal Reason was all in all, Nature, life, history being the progressive unfolding of the Absolute idea. All ethical, social and political creeds and principles were to be tested by their conformity to Pure Resson. The element of feeling appeared to me merely pathological, a disturbance of sanity and order. How to overcome the resistance of matter, of individuality and of unreason, to the manifestation of the Pure Reason was the great problem of life and society, of education and legislation. I also held with the ardour of a young inexperienced visionary that the deliverance of the race from the bondage of unreason would come about a new revolutionary polity of which the watchwords were Equality, Liberty and Fraternity.

"The sovereignty of Universal Reason, and the negation of the individual as the principle of morals, were ideas that soon came to satisfy Vivekananda's intellect and gave him an assured conquest over scepticism and materialism. What was more, they furnished him with the card and compass of life, as it were. But this brought him no peace. The conflict now entered deeper into his soul, for the creed of Universal Reason called on him to suppress the yearnings and susceptibilities of his artist nature and Bohemian temperament. His senses were keen and actue, his natural cravings and passions strong and imperious, his youthful susceptibilities tender his conviviality free and inerry. To suppress these was to kill his natural spontaneity,—almost to suppress his self. The struggle soon took a seriously ethical turn,—reason struggling for mastery with passion and sense. The fascinations of the sense and the cravings of a youthful nature now appeared to him as impure, as gross and carnal. This was the hour of darkest trial for him. His musical gift brought him associates for where manners and morals he had bitter and undisguised contempt. But his convivial temperament proved too strong for him. It was, therefore, some relief to him when I occasionally kept him company of an evening when he went out for a musical *soiree*.

"I saw and recognised in him a high, ardent and pure nature vibrant and resonant with impassioned sensibilities. He was certainly no sour or cross-grained puritan, no normal hypochondriac;

—he would indulge cynically in unconventional language except when he would spare my innocence. He took an almost morbid delight in shocking conventionality in its tabernacles, respectability in its booth; and in the pursuit of his sport would appear other than he was, puzzling and mystifying those outside his inner circle of friends. But in the recesses of his soul he wrestled with the fierce and fell spirit of Desire, the subtle and illusive spirit of Francy.

"To his repeated quest for some power which would deliver him from bondage and unavailing struggle, I could only point to the sovereignty of Pure Reason and the ineffable peace that comes of identifying the self with the Reason in the Universe. Those were for me days of a victorious Platonic transcendentalism. The experience of a refractory flesh or rebellious temperament had not come to me. I had not sufficient patience for the mood or attitude of mind which surrenders the sovereign right of self-government to artificial props or outside help, such as grace or mediation. I felt no need of conciliating feeling and nature in the cult of Reason, nor had any experience of a will divided in its allegiance to the Self The experience of a discord between the Ideal and the Real, between Nature and Spirit, had indeed come to me already in an objective way as an outstanding reality and was to come afterwards in subjective fashion though in forms quite other than what obtained in Vivekananda's case But at the time, his problems were not mine, nor were my difficulties his

"He confessed that though his intellect was conquered by the universal, his heart owned the allegiance of the individual Ego and complained that a pale, bloodless reason, severeign *de jure* but not *de facto*, could not hold out arms to save him in the hour of temptation. He wanted to know if my philosophy could satisfy his senses, could mediate bodily, as it were, for the soul's deliverance; in short, he wanted a flesh and blood reality visible in form and glory, above all, he cried out for a hand to save, to uplift, to protect, a *sakti* or power outside himself which could cure him of his impotence and cover his nothingness with glory—a *guru* or master who by embodying perfection in the flesh would still the commotion in his soul

"At the time, this appeared to me a weak born of unreason, this demand for perfection in the flesh and for a power out of ourselves to save,—this sacrifice of reason to sense,—My young

inexperienced self, confronted with this demand of soul striving with itself, knew not wherewith to satisfy it, and Vivekananda soon after betook himself to the ministers and missionaries of the Brahmo Samaj, asking Brahmos with an unconscious Socratic Irony for an ideal made real to sense, for truth made visible, for a power unto deliverance. Here he had enough, he bitterly complained, of moral disquisitions, principles, intuitions for pabulum which to him appeared tasteless and insipid. He tried diverse teachers, creeds and cults, and it was this quest that brought him, though at first in a doubting spirit, to the Paramahamsa of Dakshineswar, who spoke to him with an authority as none had spoken before, and by his *sakti* brought peace into his soul and healed the wounds of his spirit. But his rebellious intellect scarcely yet owned the Master. His mind misgave him and he doubted if the peace which would possess his soul in the presence of the Master was not illusory. It was only gradually that the doubts of that keen intellect were vanquished by the calm assurance that belong to ocular demonstration.

"I watched with intense interest the transformation that went on under my eyes. The attitude of a young and rampant Vedantist-*cum*-Hegelian-*cum*-Revolutionary like myself towards the cult of religious ecstasy and Kali-worship, may be easily imagined; and the spectacle of a born iconoclast and freethinker like Vivekananda, a creative and dominating intelligence, a tamer of souls himself caught in the meshes of what appeared to me an uncouth, supernatural mysticism was a riddle which my philosophy of the Pure Reason could scarcely read at the time. But Vivekananda, 'the loved and lost' was loved, and mourned most in what I could not but then regard as his defection; and it was personal feeling, after all, the hated pathological element of individual preference and individual relationship, which most impelled me, when at last I went on what to a home-keeping recluse like myself was an adventurous journey to Dakshineswar, to see and hear Vivekananda's Master, and spent the greater part of a long summer day in the shady and peaceful solitudes of the Temple-garden, returning as the sun set amidst the whirl and rush and roar and the awful gloom of a blinding thunder-storm, with a sense of bewilderment as well moral as physical, and a lurking perception of the truth that the majesty of Law orders the apparently irregular and grotesque, that there may be self-mastery

in apparent self-alienation, that sense even in its errors is only incipient Reason and that faith in a Saving Power *ab extra* is but the dim reflex of an original act of self-determination And a significant confirmation of all this came in the subsequent life-history of Vivekananda who, after he had found the firm assurance he sought in the saving Grace and Power of his Master, went about preaching and teaching the creed of the Universal Man, and the absolute and inalienable sovereignty of the Self"

29

VIVEKANANDA AS MODERN MESSIAH OF SOVIET RUSSIA

PREM NATH BHAT

Swami Vivekananda's wish to visit Russia when he was in London in 1896, could not materialise The Russian Czar Nicholas II had a great fascination for Bharat which is reflected in "Travels in the East of Nicholas II—Emperor of Russia" The Emperor wrote, "Here (India) where the earthly realm of sorrow borders on the heavens and when the soul is crushed by unceasing torments, this magic land calls us into a world of wonders, into the realm of the eternal mysteries of boundless wisdom." Notwithstanding all this praise for India, Swamiji made a prophecy in 1885 to his group of disciples in America, "The next great upheavel which is to bring about a new epoch will come from Russia or China" —(*Vide Eastern and Western Admirers of Swami Vivekananda*, p 203) Twenty-two years later the revolution came in Russia (and later China also followed suit). Swamiji identified himself with the poor and down-trodden and he declared, "I am a socialist" But the basis of his socialism was Vedanta philosophy with its concern for the divinity of man

TOLSTOY'S TRIBUTE IN RETROSPECT

The life and ideas of Leo-Tolstoy present the first impact of Rama Krishna and Vivekananda in Russia. Dr. E P. Chelisa, in his latest book—*Swami Vivekananda's Studies in Soviet Union*,

records thus : "During the last years of his life, Tolstoy suddenly came in contact with the writings of Vivekananda and the sayings of Rama Krishna. He was charmed by these writings.

According to Prof. Danilchuk of the Institute of International Relations of USSR, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tolstoy considered Vivekananda as a part of his 'inner world'. After reading for the first time translations of Vivekananda's speeches, Tolstoy wrote, "The *Hindu Article* has left a great impression on me. Here are my thoughts obscurely expressed".

Tolstoy also declared that Vivekananda belongs to the level of Buddha, Christ, Socrates, Plato, Kant and Schopenhauer. When in 1909 the Third Volume of Vivekananda's Speeches and Writings was presented to Tolstoy, he wrote, "The most eminent of modern Indian thinkers is Vivekananda and he should be published". Tolstoy did not like the miracles in religion. The absolutely rational interpretation of God and religion, according to Tolstoy, is Vivekananda's greatest contribution to India and the humanity at large.

When Tolstoy read Annie Besant's "Theosophy and Modern Psychology", he remarked, "She rests on what is weak, what is erroneous and Vivekananda on what is true." About Rama Krishna, Tolstoy first came to know from the book on Rama Krishna by Max Muller. He wrote, "His selection of the sayings is wonderful. Rama Krishna died fifty years ago The most brilliant wise man". This was the beginning of the drawn of *Vivekananda Hinduism* in Russia.

NEO-VEDANTA

Today, the Russian intellectuals have made deep study of the philosophy of Rama Krishna and Vivekananda. Prof. Danilchuk remarks that interest in the life and work of this remarkable patriot, thinker and social leader (Vivekananda) has been growing from day-to-day all the world over, including the Soviet Union. In 1986, when Prof. Danilchuk was in Hyderabad, a question was put as to why Soviet people were turning to the Neo-Vedanta of Vivekananda instead of Christianity, the Professor gave a detailed idea of how the true base of Russian language and culture had always been Indo-Aryan and not Judeo-Semetic. *A large number of Russian words have pure Sanskrit base.* The religion of a Father

in heaven was a later development, he said, while the inner aspect of religion, the religion of undying spirit in man, was embedded deep in the Russian soil.

Dr. E.P Chelisev saw in Vivekananda a socialist, an anti-imperialist and a humanist. He said, "the humanist ideal of Vivekananda is to certain extent ideal with Gorkey's" Nay with capital letter." Vivekananda's new humanism according to him played an important part in the general upsurge of national consciousness and struggle of the Indian people for independence. V.S. Kostyuchonko, Reader in philosophy, says, "Through the haze of romantic illusions and utopian desires, Vivekananda was nonetheless able to discern the contours of future with adequate clarity and at times even simply with striking precision. This precise and clear vision about the global rise of the masses strikes the Russian thinker with a genuine reverence for the prophetic dimensions in Vivekananda's ideas.

Chelisev said that Vivekananda stressed the inner aspect of religion instead of rituals. It is with the ritualistic or the secondary details of religion, as Vivekananda defined, that all the differences and conflicts between religions have arisen throughout the history. He finds if Vivekananda stress on the moral-spiritual aspect of religion rather than on rituals, a strong similarity with present-day Russian thought.

Chelisev further writes that Vivekananda's thought has great appeal to the present-day theoreticians of Russia. According to Komarav, a sector head in USSR Academy of Sciences, Vivekananda is the first person in Indian history who realized the failure of feudalism and the bourgeois culture to bring an effective education of the masses. Dr. R B. Rybakov, another scholar from USSR Academy of Sciences in his book 'Reformation of Hinduism' finds in Rama Krishna a fulfilment of Karl Marx's thought on religion. For Rama Krishna, Religion was the highest truth For the rationalist Vivekananda it is like science with no place for anything secret, mystical and supernatural In the midst of Rama Krishna's God-absorption, Rybakov writes, "the thought of reality of surrounding word is substantial part of Rama Krishna's message. Rybakov finds in anti-imperialist Vivekananda sharp indictment of feudalistic exploitation and his clarion call to India for shaking off its slavery and lethargy.

MISSION MONKS VISIT RUSSIA

From nineteen-sixties the monks of Rama Krishna Mission started visiting Russia. The credit for introducing Indian culture and lessons on the *Gita* goes to our philosopher-diplomat Dr. Radhakrishnan who spent hours with Stalin in explaining to him the teachings of the *Gita* Other mission monks like Swami Dayananda and Swami Nityaswarupananda visited Russia before mid-sixties. Then Swami Ranganathananda toured Russia. He delivered lectures on "Swami Vivekananda; his humanism". It was Swami Lokeshwarananda, Head of Rama Krishna Mission at Calcutta, who developed intimate relation with Russian thinkers in 1980. Dr. E.P. Chelisev, an eminent scholar of USSR, spent three months at the Calcutta Institute of Culture.

In 1986, a group of Russian intellectuals met the Indian press at the Institute of Culture, Calcutta. They openely declared that religion is an opium for the masses ***but the religion of Rama Krishna, Vivekananda is not opium.*** It is the true religion since it dehypnotizes men of rituals or ecclesiastical authors.

In 1987, 13 top-level Russian thinkers and scientists visited the Institute of Culture and participated in seminars. This was followed by a trip of Swami Hiranmayananda to Russia where he participated in the International Forum on Nuclear Weapon-Free World for the Survival of Humanity.

RUSSIAN NEED OF RELIGION

Two monks, Swami Hiranmayananda and Swami Gitananda, participated in the three-day conference which was hosted by Mikhail Gorbachov. Swami Hiranmayananda, the general secretary of Rama Krishna Mission, was invited to speak in the first session. He said that post-revolutionary Russians deplored religion as an opium for masses. Today, after seventy years of revolution Russians are in need of a religion, a new religion which is rational, universal and man-centred. In Rama Krishna, Vivekananda ideals, Russians may discover that religion which would help them fulfil their great dream as the peace-maker of modern times. It was in this conference that Gorbachov declared broad democratization

and the beginning of New Approach to Humanitarian problems. It was here that the visitors felt that iron curtain was lifted, for insiders and outsiders in Russia It was this lifting of the iron curtain which was called democratization by Gorbachov.

30

VIVEKANANDA AND DYNAMIC SPIRITUALISM

BENOY GOPAL ROY

Narendranath (later Swami Vivekananda) joined the Brahmo Samaj by signing its covenant in 1878[1] But the Samaj or the Brahmo Dharma could not satisfy the great spiritual hunger that had tormented him for years He forsook the Samaj but imbibed the spirit of Advaita or non-dualism of its great founder, Raja Rammohun Roy The Swami and the Raja were both Advaitins though they differed widely from each other in the presentation of non-dualism The Raja denounced in strongest terms the practice of idolatry but the Swami reconciled it with his philosophy of non-dualism The Raja believed in Maya and used it to demolish idolatry in any form while the Swami used Maya to destroy all materialism[2] Both of them believed in social reforms as indissolubly connected with philosophy and religion but while the Raja tried to change the Outer Man, the Swami devoted considerable attention and energy to change the Inner Man

What is the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda ? Is his philosophy divorced from religion ? Again, is his philosophy speculative or practical or both ? These questions assail us when we closely study the vast writings of the Swami To label his philosophy as Neo-Hinduism, Practical Vedanta or Universalism will be perhaps unwise since the correct connotations of these terms have yet to be formulated That the Swami drew his philosophy from the Vedas and the Upanishads is a truism Indeed, all

modern Indian Philosophers have looked upon the above sources with due reverence and inspiration. If the Swami is original, he is not so in discovering new truths but in interpreting the truths of the ancient Indian philosophy in a new and hence original way. He was aware of the changing times and wanted to adjust the ancient Indian philosophy to the requirements of the present day. Secondly, the study of western philosophy and culture and the knowledge of the impact of science on human life urged him to make a revised statement of the ancient philosophy of our land. His philosophy was not divorced from religion, rather the two were intertwined. Time and again he raised the voice of caution. What is the good of having a dry and intellectual philosophy if it be not enlivened by the emotion and personal relation of religion ? Again what is the good of having a religion which does not elevate the people, professing it ? Religion or philosophy divorced from the actualities of our personal and social life is a false show.

The minimum that can be said about his philosophy is that it is dynamic spiritualism, dynamic in the sense that it is active and energetic. The Vedas and the Upanishads may be interpreted in diverse ways but nobody can deny that these disciplines aim at the goal of spiritualism. The Swami styles this spiritualism as the Vedanta. "The only point where perhaps all our sects agree is that we all believe in the scriptures—the Vedas. This perhaps is certain, that no man can have a right to be called a Hindu who does not admit the supreme authority of the Vedas. All these Vedas, as you are aware, are divided into two portions—the Karma Kanda and the Jnana Kanda. The Karma Kanda includes various sacrifices and ceremonials of which the larger part has become disused in the present age. The Jnana Kanda as embodying the spiritual teachings of the Vedas, known as the Upanishads and the Vedanta, have always been cited as the highest authority by all our teachers, philosophers and writers, whether dualist or qualified monist or monist. Whatever be his philosophy or sect, everyone in India has to find his authority in the Upanishads. If he cannot, his sect would be heterodox. Therefore perhaps the one name in modern times which would designate every Hindu throughout the land would be 'Vedantist or Vaidik' as you may put it. And in that sense, I always use the word 'Vedantism' and 'Vedanta.'"[3] The Vedanta may be interpreted

in dualistic, qualified monistic and monistic ways But, according to the Swami, these varied interpretations need not be antagonistic to one another. Rather they fulfil one another. A dualist and a monist need not fight each other. The Swami says, "In all the Upanishads, they begin with dualistic ideas with worship and all that and end with a grand flourish of Advaitic ideas."[4] Then comes his crowning remarks : "Now I will tell you my discovery. All of religion is contained in the Vedanta, i.e., in the three stages of Vedanta philosophy, the Dvaita, the Vishishtadvaita and Advaita; one comes after the other. These are the three stages of spiritual growth in a man. Each one is necessary."[5] Such a reconciliation of dualism, qualified monism and monism may not be acceptable from an intellectual point of view. Intellectual apprehension would stumble at such an attempt. Nor can it be proved that there has been a historical evolution in the philosophical ideas from dualism to monism through qualified monism. But intellectual apprehension is one thing and realization is quite another. Intellect is but a part of our whole being and when we know by intellect, we use only a part. But when we know by realization, we know by our whole being. The Swami realized that the culminating point of philosophical and religious endeavour was non-dualism and dualism and qualified monism were its earlier stages. Such a realization also helped the Swami to find a grand unity in all religions of the world.

According to the Swami, dualism is a necessary step in our spiritual endeavour. In the lower stages of spiritual development man requires symbols, rituals and ceremonies. He begins in the concrete through forms, words and prayers and moves forward step by step until he reaches the stage of abstract realization. Forms and symbols are many and accordingly there are many religions in the world. Though the goal is the same yet men take to different forms according to the tendencies of their mind. Form and symbol help the mind to concentrate on the ultimate object of worship. But the form and symbol can never be equated with final Reality. "Image worship cannot directly give Mukti; it may be an indirect cause, a help on the way. Image worship should not be condemned, for, with many, it prepares the mind for the realization of the Advaita which alone makes man perfect."[6] The Swami thinks that every Sadhaka at the early stage of his Sadhana

is an idolater He even goes to the length of saying that every man is a born idolater and idolatry is good at some stage of development Only the perfect man, the God-man, is free from idolatry

In the early stages of Bhakti Yoga (realization through love) the individual and his God are separate entities A Bhakta begins as a dualist; he approaches God and believes that God too in His turn descends on him He passes through certain external forms of devotion and then the real thirst, the longing for God arises in his heart Such an intense thirst leads him to love and devotion which again admits of certain levels At the first level, love, knows no bargain If a man loves another for certain gain, it is no love. In the words of the Swami, it is shopkeeer's love "Wherever there is any question of buying and selling, it is no more love So when any man is praying to God : Give me this and give me that' it is no love . It is mere shop-keeping "[7] Secondly, love knows no fear So long as man thinks of his God as a dispenser of reward and punishment, he can not love him Love is incompatible with any kind of fear for love attracts while fear repels Thirdly, true love is to regarded as the highest intrinsic value The Bhakta can attain this stage of supreme love when forms and symbols have fallen off He has become one with the Unlimited and Infinite Love. God, who at first was a transcendent Reality, becomes resolved into infinite Love The Bhakta too is transformed His egoism is gone, his desires are tranquilled and at the end he finds that 'love, lover and beloved are one ' This is how the Swami interprets the path of love but doubt remains whether all tinge of dualism can be so completely wiped out. Love always requires two, the lover and the beloved. Even at the highest level some sense of dualism must exist. The Jnana-yogi's ideal lies in his complete identification with the ultimate Reality Such an ideal is most welcome to the Swami but he tries in his own way to reconcile Jnana with Bhakti. In one sense, all the paths—Jnana Bhakti and Karma—can be reconciled since all of them lead to the same goal. Looked at from the rational angle, the paths may be contrary or even contradictory but from the superior standpoint of realization all differences melt away

The Advaita or non-dualism of Jnana-Yoga is the central pivot of Vivekananda-philosophy The Swami repeatedly asserts—

'I am He. This is the truth. Know the truth and practise it. The goal may be distant but stop not till it is reached ' According to him, ignorance and not sin is the root-cause of our bondage, suffering and evil. The moment we realize our true nature which is the infinite nature, we attain complete freedom. To know is to realize the One. Knowledge of plurality is incomplete knowledge and the Jnana-yogi has to transcend it. He transcends it by rising above the three qualities—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. He also rises above the impact of all opposites and attains equanimity. Why is there the sense of the many ? As a Shankarite, the Swami replies—It is all due to Maya. Sister Nivedita, a disciple of the Swami, describes Maya as "that shimmering, elusive, half-real, half-unreal complexity in which there is no rest, no satisfaction, no ultimate certainty of which we become aware through the senses and through the mind as dependent on the senses."[8] The Swami explains the implications of the concept of Maya to his western audience—This world of ours is a mixture of existence and non-existence We get knowledge of this world by means of our five senses. Had we another sense, we would have got more knowledge about it. But all knowledge is relative to some mind that changes. Our knowledge tells us that the world has relative existence but not absolute existence. How can we have such knowledge as is unchangeable and infinite ? There is contradiction in our knowledge and in our existence and the Swami attributes it to Maya. Everywhere we have to move through contradiction, contradiction between pleasure and pain, good and evil and life and death. The material prosperity of mankind is riddled with contradiction and the very philosophy of materialism is not free from it. Is contradiction the last word of philosophy ? Is Maya final ? The Swami answers : "We see, then, that beyond this Maya, the Vedantic philosophers find something which is not bound by Maya, and if we can get there, we shall not be bound by Maya."[9] He does not get into the hairsplitting arguments regarding the ontological and epistemological status of Maya. But he lays all emphasis on the fact that Maya is sheer contradiction. The question arises : Is rational knowledge, that man aims at in his pursuit of science and philosophy, also Maya or contradiction ? If so, what is the good of cultivating such disciplines ? The Swami is aware of it and suggests that true knowledge is not the knowledge of the many but of the One.

Advaita or non-dualism is the right and final knowledge. Science tries to know the truth about things and events, This is why in the beginning it concerns itself with the fleeting plurality but its endeavour will not end until it reaches the solid bed-rock of unity. 'The first principle of scientific reasoning is that the particular is explained by the general—until we come to the universal."[10] Similar is the case with rational philosophy.

Thus, we see, according to the Swami, the ultimate aim of science, philosophy and religion is the same. It is to ascend up to the knowledge of the One. All researches, experiments and observations of mankind will end in the discovery and realization of the One, Non-dual Reality. But we have to go through plurality, diversity, contradiction and Maya. We cannot dismiss them as sheer illusions. They are there as necessary steps or stages. As soon as the knowledge of non-dualism emerges, all Maya vanishes but as long as it exists, it has to be faced squarely. The Swami is emphatic on the point. He does not advise people to retire to the forest for meditation, at least he does not prescribe it for all. The only way to face plurality and contradiction is to take to the path of Karma (disinterested action). This is how the Swami tries to reconcile Jnana-Yoga with Karma-Yoga. A disciple poses the question : How can Karma help Jnana ? Shankara refuted the inter-mingling of Jnana and Karma. The Swami replies : "Shankara after saying so has again described Karma as indirect help to the manifestation of Jnana and the means for the purification of the mind. But I do not contradict his conclusion that in transcendent knowledge there is no touch of any work whatsoever. So long as man is within the realm of the consciousness of action, agent and the result of action, he is powerless to sit idle without doing some work . . . . That all work is the effect of ignorance may be true from the absolute standpoint, but within the sphere of relative consciousness it has a great utility."[11] Each of the Yogas—Jnana, Bhakti and Karma—is a path to the realization of the ultimate Reality. The Swami's originality lies in asserting that they are not contradictory to one another. Rather the two, Bhakti-Yoga and Karma-Yoga should be taken as preparatory stages to Jnana-Yoga. The Swami is a Jnana-Yoga but for that reason he does not discard the values of Bhakti and Karma as useless accretions. Some critics opine that the Swami believes in a synthesis of various Yogas. But in a synthesis none

of the elements should be predominating. Again and again the Swami has declared—Realise within yourself the truth that you are He. Know yourself to be Brahman In other words, he has always emphasised the preponderance of Jnana over Bhakti and Karma. Nor can his Yoga be called integral Yoga as we find it in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo Integral Yoga is not synthesis where the whole is more import than the parts. In an integral experience the whole is as important as the parts Again such an experience cannot be called an organic unity where the whole is logically prior to the parts The integral experience is at once one and many, whole and parts. In it there is no ontological or logical priority or posteriority of whole or parts.

We have mentioned earlier that Vivekananda-philosophy is dynamic spiritualism. An original feature of such spiritualism is that it is active and energetic and not passive and theoretic. What the Swami believes, he preaches and he acts accordingly. Moksha is not an idle talk, it can be achieved by anybody. Only the aspirant has to be strong in body and mind. Weakness in any form is repugnant to the Swami. For him, the Vedanta breathes one idea, strength. He attributes all evils to weakness. "Know that all sins and all evils can be summed up in one word, weakness. It is weakness that is the motive power in all evil doing; it is weakness that is the source of all selfishness, it is weakness that makes men injure others, it is weakness that makes them manifest what they are not in reality."[12] The Buddha taught non-injury to mankind but the Swami feels that behind that doctrine lurks a dreadful weakness. His own ideal is that giant of a saint whom they killed in the Mutiny, and who broke his silence when stabbed to the heart to say—And thou also art He.[13] Strength is often associated with violence and aggressiveness. It may sometimes lead to the fulfilment of selfish desire. But the Swami's conception of strength is different He combines strength with the spirit of renunciation Act but renounce its fruits not in a meek way but in a bold way. All misery and all pain come from attachment. If one works with a view to having something in return, he gets himself entangled in the meshes of attachment and selfishness. This again is a form of weakness. Only the strong man can give and does not ask for anything in return. Nietzche, a contemporary European philosopher, all speaks of strength. But his concept of strength is different from that of the Swami.

Nietzch's concept smacks of material power and aggressiveness which are totally absent in the Swami's.

Another original feature of Vivekanda's spritualism lies in the harmonization of ethics and social service with philosophy and religion Some westerners think that Indian philosophy does not lay sufficient emphasis on man's ethical life. But the dynamic spiritualism of the Swami would belie their apprehension. In it philosophy, religion, ethics and social ethics have all been neatly combined with one another. Vedanta teaches men to have faith in themselves. Not to have faith in oneself is tantamount to atcheism. If you think of yourself as impure and sinful, you give the lie direct to yourself. Christianity believes in original sin but the Swami believes in primary ignorance. And the greatest ignorance is the ignorance of one's divine nature. "The ideal of faith in ourselves is of the greatest help to us. If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practised, I am sure, a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished."[14] From such a faith arises the zeal for work which is prompted by passionlessness This might sound impracticable to a modern ethicist A common man cannot work without any desire or passion. Passionless work, for him, is no work. But the Swami thinks otherwise The less passion or desire there is, the better we work. The true spirit of work vanishes when it is actuated by selfish passions. It is true, a Yogi or a Sadhaka can work without any passion or desire but to the common man such work is only an ideal Passionless work necessitates a calm, balanced and equable mind which only a Yogi or a Sadhaka possesses What, then, the common man should do? The Swami prescribes for them altruistic action as a primary step. Each one of them should work to achieve some kind of universal good. Universal good is always prompted by a sense of oneness Everything that makes for oneness is morally good. Love is morally commendable because it unites. But hatred is false because it separates and destroys.

The ideals of Vedanta-ethics lies in the consciousness and realization of the One amidst the manifold that we see around us. The sense of oneness is never compatible with the idea of privilege. According to the Swami, the work of the Advaita is to break down all privileges There is first the idea of physical privilege; then the privilege of wealth; there is still the subtle

privilege of intellect. Lastly, there is the privilege of the so-called spirituality. All evils and sufferings in societies emanate from the idea of privilege. Physically strong people rule over the weak. These days science and technology have offered a section of people the privilege of tremendous power. Also intellectual people and the so-called spiritual leaders claim privileges. Excess of knowledge without holiness has become a menace to the peace and prosperity of the masses As a social reformer the Swami would like to destory all such privileges But how to destroy? Let us take the Hindu caste system with its privileges. The Swami would never think of levelling down the four castes. "Caste", says he, "should not go; but should only be readjusted occasionally. Within the old structure is to be found life enough for the building of the two hundred thousand new ones. It is sheer nonsense to desire the abolition of caste. The new method is—evolution of the old."[15] What the Swami desires is that attempts should be made to wake up the ignorant masses and to give them back their individualities which they lost through centuries of privileged tyranny. It is the duty of the Brahmin caste to work for the salvation of the rest of Indian population. The non-Brahmins too should not site idle. They should use all their energies in acquiring the culture which the Brahmin has. The moment a Sudra acquires the culture of the Brahmin, he becomes equal to the Brahmin. In other words, the Swami emphasises not the outer environmental changes but the inner ones. Let the four castes remain but let there be no privilege attached to any. In recent years Mahatma Gandhi too tried to demolish the caste-privileges of the Hindus Almost in a similar tone Gandhiji remarks : "The four divisions define a man's calling, they do not restrict or regulate social intercourse. The divisions define duties, they confer no privileges; Varnashrama is self-restraint and conservation and economy of energy."[16]

Notes and References

1. See *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, by his Eastern and Western disciples, Vol. I
2. See G S. Roy Choudhury, *Swami Vivekananda O Banglar Unabinsha Satabdi*

3 *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekanada,* Part III pp 228-29 (Mayavati Ed 1922)
4 *Ibid*, p 233
5 *The Complete Works,* Part V p 64 (Mayavati Ed 1924).
6 See *Selections from Swami Vivekananda,* pp 373-74 (Advaita Ashrama, Almora, 1944)
7 See Swami Vivekananda, *Religion of Love,* p 105 (1954)
8 Sister Nivedita, *The Master as I saw him,* p 25 (4th Ed)
9. *The Complete Works,* Part II, p 104 (Mayavati Ed 1921)
10 See *The Complete Works,* Part I, pp 168-69 (Mayavati Ed 1923)
11 *Selections from Swami Vivekananda,* pp 457-58 (Advaita Ashrama 1044)
12 *The Complete Works,* Part III, p 425 (Mayavati Ed 1922)
13 See *The Master as I saw him,* pp 240-41
14 *The Complets Works,* Part II, p 299
15 *The Complete Works,* Part V, p 145 (Mayavati Ed 1924)
16 See *The Gandhi Sutras,* by D S Sarma (Appendix)

31

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CONCEPT OF SERVICE

SWAMI SWAHANANDA

INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda lived only for about forty years He was born on January 12, 1863 and passed away on July 4, 1902. A very short life indeed ! Of those years again he worked for a decade only Still he left such an indelible impression on the later generations that many writers thought it necessary to include his ideas for their specialized studies Hence many Universities in India teach and do research on his philosophy, social thought, political thinking and even his literary and anthropological ideas Several scholars from the West as well as from Russia are specially studying him Max Muller popularized the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Romain Rolland wrote on *Swami Vivekananda and his Universal Gospel* In recent days in his book on the life of Mahatma Gandhi entitled *Lead, kindly Light*, Vincent Shean wrote a chapter on Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna He signifies them there as 'Forerunners of Gandhi ' Another scholar Dr Brown, in his book on the political thought of India called *The White Umbrella*, devotes a chapter to Vivekananda In an interesting book *The Inevitable Choice*, the author Dr Soper finds in the Swami's harmonizing ideas a great challenge to all 'special' revelations Many of the leaders of India including Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo and Subhas Chandra Bose felt his impact Many

political, social and even revolutionary workers derived inspiration from his writings So tremendous has been the influence on the posterity of this great son of Mother India ! Hence, it is worth-studying his views regarding the doctrine of service, which is of perennial interest and need.

'My life is my message', Gandhi used to say. This is true of all great souls. It is much more true of spiritual personalities. As Swami Vivekananda said, Sri Ramakrishna was content to live the life, the interpretation has to be given by others, for such souls 'one with the Infinite Spirit' do not take a single false step. It is not necessary to go into the details of the life of Swami Vivekananda, which is well-known. There are many incidents in his life and in that of his Master, which show the sympathy, the consideration, the zeal for serving fellow beings, which must have contributed a great deal to the formulation and development of his famous Gospel of Service which is our field of special study here.

'Child is father of the man', says the old adage. True to it, we find even in his boyhood days indications of his social awareness, sympathy for fellow men and leadership and understanding for suitable action. His father was a magnanimous man and mother a soft-hearted, loving woman. A large retinue of relations and dependents were maintained in their house as their own children with all affection and consideration. As a boy, Narendranath was very kind-hearted Whenever beggars would come to their house, he was sure to give off whatever came on his way. Even shutting him up would not mend matters, for on hearing the voice of the beggar he would throw things through the windows for them. Caste did not appeal to him As a child, he experimented by smoking pipes reserved for lower castes as was the custom in those days, if he also should lose his own caste ! Once a sailor came to the help of Naren and his friends to raise a trapeze in their gymnasium. While lifting, the trapeze fell down knocking the sailor unconscious. All the boys ran away thinking him dead but Naren nursed him, took him to a doctor and when he recovered, sent him with a little purse as a present. In his student days, he joined the Brahmo Samaj, which was advocating various social reforms. He was a voracious reader and became acquainted with social thoughts of the masterminds of the West. And in his speeches and writings, we find references to many of these thinkers.

His search for truth ultimately brought him to Sri Ramakrishna bringing in his life's fulfilment His boldness as reflected in his total unconcern for his own safety was evident in an incident. Once when a boy was on the point of being run over by a horse carriage, the boy Naren rushed before the carriage and was successful in saving the boy and thereby earned the applause of the onlookers and gratitude of the parents. After the death of his father, Naren experienced much financial uncertainty and even poverty for sometime As a mandicant, he underwent much hardship and saw the dire poverty of the people. This made him aware of the great sufferings through which our people pass.

Swami Vivekananda was a mother's heart. At the sight of suffering he would be overwhelmed. When a famine was raging in Bengal and his assistants were in doubts if they would get enough money for conducting the Relief work, he seriously thought of selling away the Belur Math property which he had just purchased to carry on the work of bringing in the spiritual heritage of eternal India to the people, the work of which he dreamt for years. So intense was his feeling. Deep sympathy was the key to all genuine service. So he told his brother disciples at the Abu Road Station, just prior to his leaving for the West, the following passionate words :

> 'I have now travelled all over India, and lately in the Maharashtra country and the Western Coasts. But alas ! it was an agony to me, my brothers, to see with my own eyes the terrible poverty and misery of the masses, and I could not restrain my tears ! It is not my firm conviction that it is futile to preach religion amongst them without first trying to remove their poverty and their sufferings. It is for this reason,—to find some means for the salvation of the poor of India—that I am not going to America !' *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*: By His Eastern and Western Disciples, 1915, Vol. III, p. 141.

His sympathy for the poor and the lowly was immense. Once a group of Santhal labourers were employed for work in the Math. Open with tears in his eyes, he would hear their tale of woe. Before they took their leave after finishing the work, he arranged a feast for them.

Such was the heart of Swami Vivekananda and so intense was

his feeling for the people that he once told Girish Chandra Ghosh : 'Look here, G.C., the thought comes to me that even if I have to undergo a thousand births to relieve the misery of the world, aye, even to remove the least pain from anyone, I shall cheerfully do it ! I think, oh, of what use is my personal *Mukti* alone ! I shall take everyone along that path with myself !' (*ibid.*, pp. 166-67).

Indeed it will be immensely fruitful to study the views of this great heart on the concept of service.

ORIGIN OF THE CONCEPT OF SERVICE

Philosophical Basis

Search for unity has been the one passion of all mankind. This is more true of the Indian people. The Vedantic philosophy pointed out that unity of existence is a logical necessity and the saints and the Upanisads asserted that it is a reality. The visible universe, the individual and the ultimate reality are one and the same. 'All this is Brahman,' said the *Mundaka Upanisad* (II, ii. 11), 'All this is Atman', said the *Chandogya Upanisad* (VII, xxv. 2). Again, 'This Self is Brahman', said the *Brhadarunyaka* (II, v. 19). This interest in the Self or Soul or Atman is the pivot of the Vedanta philosophy. The realization of the eternal Self is the goal of all activities of man. Whatever takes man towards that realization is spiritually beneficial. Vedanta is man-centred but man is nothing but the embodied Soul

The whole point hinges upon our conception of man. In trying to define the real man, rationalism and science find it to be beyond their grasp Vedanta, too, faced the problems and gave the unique conception of the Atman, the ultimate reality in man. Vedanta analyzed a visible man. What is he ? Is he the body, or the mind or something still finer ? Real nature, according to philosophy, means that which does not change. A really real thing must have been in the past, is now in the present and will continue to be in the future too. Is there anything in man that is constant ? The body, we know, changes all the time and will not be there after a certain period of time. It is transitory. So it is not the reality. What about the mind ? It, too, goes on changing to the Hindu philosophy which accords some permanence to it continuing from birth to birth, it dies out in final realization or in

absorption. Is there anything real at all then in man? The materialists said, 'no'. They were assailed by the argument that a man is a self evident fact and even if you cannot locate his fundamental reality he still exists and it is an axiom that nothing comes out of nothing. Thus concerned, they said, 'we do not know its nature.' Now this is agnosticism. And, of course, 'we don't know' is a very safe position. Then the retort came 'Do you know ? Vedanta said, 'Yes; we know it not through reason or physical analysis as such but through institution, through spiritual absorption.' Sages down the ages have experienced it, and this experience is part of human heritage. And what is it ? It is the Atman, the Self, the Spirit, the inmost spiritual core in man, which is his unchanging, real nature. The apparent man is the manifested real man, who is one with the Absolute, the Unity of existence. So service of man is really service to God. Hence, it follow that, for Self-realization, disinterested service of man is necessary and perfect men must serve either to set an example or out of sympathy, or for both.

Buddhism spoke in favour of negating the soul whereas Vedanta saw the soul everywhere. The difficulty arose because of difference of concepts. In the Buddhist concept of Anattavada, the term soul stands for something which to a Vedanta is known as *antahkarana* or *ahamkara* (the mind stuff or the ego-sense). Hence the Soul, in the Buddhist sense, might be the seat of selfishness and egotism, but Vedantic Self stands for the essence, the Supreme Self behind the empirical So, Swami Vivekananda speaks about manifesting the glory of the Atman and that precisely, according to him, is the purpose of life. Service of man helps in that manifestation.

'Ethics is unity', said the Swami, and he often pointed out 'that knowledge was the finding of unity in diversity, and that the highest point in every science was reached when it found the one unity underlying all variety, and this was as true in physical science as in the spiritual' (*ibid.*, p. 206). Thus, according to him, the whole field of moral science was based on the unity of existence and all types of service had this idea of unity as their philosophical basis.

The same idea has been expressed by all religions though sometimes more pointedly by some. The dictum, 'Love thy neighbour as myself' or 'Do as thou would be done by' is the

common advice of every faith.

By service, Swami Vivekananda meant not only ameliorative service, but also all types of social action for all-round social welfare. Social reform and social work are all included in his doctrine of service. The major point in this doctrine is that we are to worship God in man by rendering service to the latter. In an inspiring poem he wrote :

From highest Brahman to the yonder worm,
Everywhere is the same God, the All-Love;
Friend, offer mind, soul, body, at their feet.
These are His manifold forms before thee,
Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God ?
Who loves all beings, withdut distinction,
He indeed is worshipping best his God.

He coined the word *Daridranarayana*, God in the form of the poor—and asked us to serve him 'Where should you go to seek God,—are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, Gods ? Why not worship them first ?' He believed that this type of service is doubly beneficial. If we forget God in the temple the whole service is practically a loss whereas in this kind of worship at least the sufferings will be physically mitigated. Thus, it is a more useful type of worship, suitable to the modern temper too.

Religious Attitudes to Work

In order to appreciate Swami Vivekananda's contribution in this respect, it is worth-recalling the various religious attitudes towards work that prevailed in different disciplines. Hinduism stressed on the idea of *dana*, gift and *Istapurta*, social service. The traditional idea looked upon the duties of Varna and Asrama as ibligatory and a preparation for deeper spiritual life.

From the standpoint of deeper religion, there were and are, four major approaches to work depending upon the temperaments of men. The various spiritual disciplines of all faiths have been brought under *Jnana Bhakti*, *Raja* and *Karma Yogas*. The intellectuals find analysis, discrimination and knowledge suitable to their taste. The emotional people like the expression of their emotions. The people who are temperamentally active want to do something tangible. Now these three, intellect, emotion and

activity are the three possible functions of the mind. When the mind is at rest, i e., it is free from all these three functions, *Raja-Yoga* experiences come in. Based on these four *Yogas* or paths to realization, different attitudes towards work have been prescribed.

From the standpoint of *Jnana-Yoga*, analysis leading to the knowledge that Atman alone is the reality is the major discipline. So work in this system is done with a detachment, with the thought that the Self is untouched, *asanga*, and it is the body and the mind which are engaged in activities. Work is done for the purification of the mind in the preparatory stage. Many of these votaries try to apply the idea of one Spirit pervading everything and service to other creatures as service to the Spirit.

In the *Bhakti* system, every work is done with the idea of Divine service. This is done either through service to a deity or service to other creatures as God's creation. As Saint Tukaram puts it, 'God is our friend and through Him everybody is our friend.' The definition of Sage Narada that 'Whatever is done for God devotion' has raised every activity to spiritual service, if done for God.

In *Raja-Yoga*, the stress is one deep concentration to realize the 'aloneness' of the Self free from all defects of sufferings etc. To bring in concentration, a votary does every work with attention which keeps the mind in a field of thought. Gradually attention becomes more pointed and frees the mind from duality leading it to the realization of oneness.

In *Karma-Yoga*, work is done for work's sake The objective is to practise non-attachment. The adherent to this discipline tries to free himself from agitation and anxiety and holds fast to the ideal of 'intense rest amidst intense activity and intense activity amidst intense rest' The test for his non-attachment is that he has 'as much power of attachment as he has the powers of detachment'.

Swami Vivekananda harmonized the conflict among the different attitudes. So says he :

> 'Every man must develop according to his own nature. As every science has its methods, so has every religion The methods of attaining the end of religion are called *Yoga* by us, and the different forms of *Yoga* we teach, are adapted to the different natures and temperaments of man We classify them

in the following way, under four heads :

(1) *Karma-Yoga*—The manner in which a man realizes his own divinity through works and duty.
(2) *Bhakti-Yoga*—The realization of the divinity through devotion to, and love of, a Personal God.
(3) *Raja-Yoga*—The realization of the divinity through the control of mind.
(4) *Jnana-Yoga*—The realization of a man's own divinity through knowledge.

These are all different roads leading to the same centre—God. Indeed, the varieties of religious belief are an advantage, since all faiths are good, so far as they encourage man to lead a religious life The more sects there are, the more opportunities there are for making successful appeals to divine instinct in all men. (*The Complete Works*, Vol. V, p. 292),

Swami Vivekananda visualized an ideal character by the blending of these different disciplines. He felt that development of man is at its best, in other words, Self-realization is at its perfection, when human nature finds a many-sided expression and in which *Jnana, Bhakti, Karma* all discover their respective limits and possibilities. He felt that by their combination, it was possible to produce a balanced character, free from the possible defects of each of these exclusive paths—the heartlessness of the intellectuals, bigotry of the emotionals, aloofness of the meditative and arrogance of the active. In a letter he writes :

'I agree with you so far that faith is a wonderful insight and that it alone can save, but there is the danger of its breeding fanaticism and barring further progress.

'*Jnanam* is all right, but there is the danger of its becoming dry intellectualism. Love is great and noble, but it may die away in meaningless sentimentalism. A harmony of all these is the thing required. Ramakrishna was such a harmony. Such beings are few and far between; but keeping him and his teachings as the ideal we can move on. And is amongst us, each one may not individually attain to that perfection, still we may get it collectively by counteracting, equipoising, adjusting and fulfilling one another. This would be harmony

by a number of persons, and a decided advance on all other forms and creeds.' (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, 1948, p. 88).

He held up his Master Sri Ramakrishna who was 'a synthesis of the utmost of philosophy, mysticism, and work' before society as the ideal to be emulated and said in another letter :

'About doctrines and so forth I have to say only this, that if anyone accepts Paramhamsa Deva as *Avatara* etc. it is all right; if he desn't do so, it is just the same. The truth about it is that in point of character, Paramhamsa Deva beats all previous record, and as regards teaching, he was more liberal, more original and more progressive than all his predecessors. In other words, the older Teachers were rather one-sided, while the teaching of this new Incarnation or Teacher is that the best point of *yoga*, devotion, knowledge and work must be combined now so as to form a new society . . . . The older ones were no doubt good, but this is the new religion of this age—the synthesis of *yoga*, knowledge, devotion and work, the propagation of knowledge and devotion to all, down to the very lowest, without distinction of age or sex. The previous Incarnations were all right, but they have been synthesized in the person of Ramakrishna. For the ordinary man and the beginner, steady devotion (*nistha*) to an ideal is of paramount importance. That is to say, teach them that all great Personalities should be duly honoured, but homage should be paid now to Ramakrishna. There can be no vigour without steady devotion. Without it one cannot preach with the intensity of a *Mahavira* (Hanuman). Besides, the previous ones have become rather old. Now we have a new India, with its new God, new religion and New Vedas.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. VII, p. 484).

Swami Vivekananda's Inspiration

Various opinions have been expressed regarding the inspiration behind Swami Vivekananda's gospel of service. True, there are various influences preparing a great man for delivering his special message. But even at an early age, the Swami had the intuitive knowledge of his high destiny, and he spoke to some of his college-

mates that he would chalk out a new path for himself. But it is after meeting Sri Ramakrishna and his training under the latter and the experience of Oneness as a result, that he was convinced that he had a message to deliver and a mission to fulfil. The call did not come from any external agency but from his inmost self which was one with Reality, as experience about which he said that even if a fool entered into it he came out a sage. It is because of this that he spoke 'like one having authority and not as the scribes'. It is this which made Vivekananda a Prophet of old. (*The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. IV, p. 169) tries to narrate the differences on him :

> 'The chief formulative influences that went to the determining of his vision may be classified generally under the following heads : His Master's great prophecies regarding him; his training and his Realization; his knowledge of Western philosophies, history and Sanskrit scriptures; the constant study of the Divine life his *Guru* before him in which he found the key of to life and the verification of the Sastras; his travels all over his Motherland during which he availed himself of the constant opportunities of comparing her with what she had been and was, and of studying the life and thoughts of the people, their needs and possibilities, and the diversities of their customs and faiths; and mixing with princes and peasants, saints and scholars, he "grasped in its comprehensiveness", as Sister Nivedita says, "that vast whole of which his Master's life and personality had been a brief and intense epitome. These, then,—the Sastra, the *Guru*, and the Motherland;—are the three notes that mingle themselves to form the music of the works of Vivekananda. These are the treasures which it is his to offer".'

Meditation in Kanyakumari sitting on the last rock brought certain convictions in him regarding his future plan of work. In that hour of inspiration, he found his mission clear. He was to cross the seas and spread the light for the good of the world. Nay, there was something more. He was also to sacrifice his life for the sake of his poor countrymen. So, intense was his anguish for the lot of the suffering millions ! He was to evolve plans for the amelioration of their suffering. In that moment of supreme

compassion, comparable to that of Buddha's, even the bliss of absorption in the Absolute was rejected. To him, came the vision of the poor who were to be served as veritable gods with his life's blood in a spirit of worship, Swami Vivekananda's gospel of service took a definite shape at that very moment. About this feeling he writes thus in a letter :

> 'My brother, in view of all this, specially of the poverty and ignorance, I had no sleep. At Cape Comorin siting in Mother Kumari's temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock—I hit upon a plan : We are so many *sannyasins* wandering about, and teaching the people metaphysics—it is all madness. Did not our *Gurudeva* use to say, "An empty stomach is no good for religion ?" That those poor people are leading the life of brutes is simply due to ignorance. We have for all ages been sucking their blood and trampling them under foot.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. VI, p. 254)

It is clear that Swami Vivekananda's feelings played an important part in the formation of his gospel of service Service originates from the fullness of heart. But the doctrine of service requires a saint to render validity and a philosopher to give language to it. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda's message has been looked upon as the commentary of the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. But some felt his Master Sri Ramakrishna was only a mystic. It is Vivekananda who, familiar with the modern thinking, brought in these extraneous ideas from foreign sources. But facts would not bear the contention. While Swami Vivekananda was, to be sure, impressed by the social work of modern type and admired the power of organization and the techniques, the original inspiration is rooted in the Gospel of his Master and in the tradition. It is characteristic of Hindu thought that in every age there was a dichotomy between knowledge and action, between *Jnana* and *Karma* and their ultimate reconciliation had to be made. From the Vedic age down to the present day, this dichotomy and reconciliation can be noticed. It is because Hinduism deals with the totality of life and experience that its scheme does not exclude any of the aspects. *Jnana* and *Karma*, knowledge and action, represent the two halves constituting life. Action stands for the manifoldness of experience and efforts for

desired objects whereas knowledge stands for the denial of life and its desires and seeing the truth face to face. Both are necessary in a total scheme for life's fulfilment. The problem in every age of Indian history has been the reconciliation of the two, making action leading to knowledge. This made the view of life more comprehensive and synthetic.

In the Vedic age, the conflict arose between sacrificial rites and *Atma-vidya*, the spiritual wisdom. In the Upanisads, the Vedic gods were idealized into Brahmin and the Vedic ceremonies into various meditations leading to final realization. Sri Krana reconciled both ritualistic and secular activities. The *Mahabharata* gave the story of the butcher and the pious wife who by sheer performance of their duty got knowledge. With the rise of Acarya Sankara, superiority of knowledge was firmly established over ritualism which had powerful advocates in Kumarila, Mandana and others Subservience of *Karma* to *Bhakti* was forcefully presented by Acarya Ramanuja and others. The modern age required a wider synthesis, for the question of the value of secular work has been brought to the forefront because of the tremendous social and organizational activity requiring the attention of individuals. To reconcile this with the supreme aim of life was the problem. Swami Vivekananda took up the problem and his answer was the well-known doctrine of service, the worship of the Divine in man, which give him in a distinction among the thinkers of modern times. He was not content in merely giving the idea, he exhorted the people to work for it and himself started several institutions in his life time.

Some writers see a sort of disparity in between the thoughts of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, for Sri Ramakrishna, the man of realization in fullness of *Bhakti* and *Jnana*, once spoke disparagingly of *Karma*. Once when Rrishnadas Paul, a noted social reformer, and that doing good to society was their principal duty, Sri Ramakrishna retorted· 'God alone can look after the world Let man first realize God. Let him get Divine authority and be endowed with his power. Then and then alone he can think of doing good to others.' Also to Shambhunath Mallick, he said, 'When God appears before you, would you seek schools and hospitals of Him, or beg for *Bhakti*, *Jnana*, etc. ? Then give up all these thoughts of hospital-building and think of God alone.' Again he said, 'A man went to the Kali temple at Kalighat and went on distributing money to the

beggars and in the process could not get time to see the Mother!' Therefore, it is argued that according to Sri Ramakrishna, all work is an obstacle and if at all work is to be done, it should be done after realization. But it has been pointed out that the doctrine of service, an essential teaching of Swami Vivekananda, is only another version of the doctrine of the harmony of religions, an equally essential teaching of Sri Ramakrishna, and that the one cannot be without the other The harmony of religions is the most unique of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings and it stands for the equal validity of all religions, if sincerely followed. Religion stands for spiritual unfoldment and not for mere creeds and rituals. So whatever pushes a man forward towards final realization is religion. And in that sense, does not life itself become religion? In this sense only Swami Vivekananda said, 'Let every man have his own religion.' 'Religion is the manifestation of Divinity already in man', said he So life with its joys and sorrows, good and evil, becomes the process of that manifestation. Hence, the harmony is not merely of religions but of all lives. And Sri Ramakrishna realized this harmony, this oneness The divinity of man is a fact with the saints. Others also can realize it, if they change their idea about man and serve him. Without the spirit of worshipful service, we cannot see the vision of the Divine in men, says a writer, and without that vision we cannot perceive every life as the unfolding of the Divine, which is religion,

When we look at the life of Sri Ramakrishna, we find that he gave direct support also even to the physical type of service. He himself exhorted Mathur Babu, his care-taker, to feed the poor in Deoghar during a famine. He felt his identity with a belaboured boatman or with Nature in the form of green grass. These are instances of his complete identification with non-living as well as all living beings The unity of existence of Vedanta became a reality with him and the service to humanity is only an application of this idea. A significant anecdote has thus been described in *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, (1955, p 107) : 'The general teachings which the Master imparted to his disciples Narendranath assimilated in a unique way. He was the readiest among them all in arriving at their true spirit. His soul was most attuned to the spiritual vibrations of the Master's words. Thus, he read volumes where others read but pages of that Revelation unto men which was the life and gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. Really Naren

possessed a rare insight to interpret Sri Ramakrishna's words. One instance will suffice. One day, some time during the year 1884, Sri Ramakrishna was seated in his room at Dakshineswar, surrounded by his disciples among whom was Naren. The conversation drifted to the Vaisnava religion. The Master gave the gist of the cult of Lord Gauranga and finished by saying : "This religion enjoins upon its followers the practice of three things, viz. relish for the name of God, compassion for all living creatures and service to the Vaisnavas, the devotees of the Lord. The real meaning of these precepts is this . That God is not different from His name. Therefore one should always repeat his name. God and His devotee, Krsna and the Vaisnava. are not separate from one another Therefore, everyone should show respect to all saints and devotee. Realizing this world as belonging to Sir Krsna utmost compassion should be shown to all creatures." Hardly had he uttered the words, "Compassion to all creatures", when he fell into *samadhi*. After a while he came back to a semi-conscious state of mind and said to himself, "Compassion for creatures ! Compassion for creatures ! Thou fool ! An insignificant worm crawling on earth, thou to show compassion ? No, it cannot be, it is not compassion for others, but rather service to man, recognizing him to be the veritable manifestation of God !" Everyone present there, no doubt, heard those words of Sri Ramakrishna uttered from the innermost consciousness of his soul; but none but Naren could gauge their meaning. When Naren left the room he said to the others, "what a strange light have I discovered in those wonderful words of the Master ! How beautifully has he reconciled the ideal of *Bhakti* with the knowledge of the Vedanta, generally interpreted as hard, austere and inimical to human sentiments and emotions. What a grand, natural and sweet synthesis ! The ordinary impression is that the culture of the knowledge of Vedanta demands an utter ostracism of society and humanity and a rooting out of all tender sentiments such as love, devotion, compassion etc. The aspirant thus goes astray in cherishing an uncompromizing hatred towards the world and his fellow creatures, thinking them as impediments in the way of spiritual attainments. But from those words of wisdom which Sri Ramakrishna uttered in an ecstatic mood, I have understood that the ideal of Vedanta lived by the recluse outside the pale of society can be practised even from hearth and home and applied to all our daily schemes

of life. Whatever may be the avocation of a man, let him understand and realize that it is God alone who has manifested Himself as the world and created beings He is both immanent and transcendent. It is He who has become all diverse creatures, objects of our love, respect or compassion and yet He is beyond all these. Such realization of Divinity in humanity leaves no room for arrogance. By realizing it, a man cannot have any jealously or pity for any other being. Service of man, knowing him to be the manifestation of God, purifies the heart, and in no time, such an aspirant realizes himself as part and parcel of God, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. Those words of Sri Ramakrishna throw an altogether new light upon the path of devotion. Real devotion is far off until the aspirant realizes the immanence of God. By realizing Him in and through all beings and by serving Him through humanity, the devotee acquires real devotion. Those following the paths of work and *yoga* are similarly benefited by those words of the Master. The embodied being cannot remain even for a minute without doing any work. All his activities should be directed to the service of man, the manifestation of God upon earth, and this will accelerate his progress towards the goal. However, if it be the will of God, the day will soon come when I shall proclaim this grand truth before the world at large. I shall make it the common property of all, the wise and the fool, the rich and the poor, the Brahmin and the Pariah".'

This shows how this remark of Sri Ramakrishna opened a new dimension to Vivekananda's thoughts. Even as a student he said that he would preach this grand idea when the time came. The idea of harmony of religions, the divinity of the soul, the oneness of existence—all take their basis in the vision of the divine in man. The democratic principle of giving value to the individual has its firm roots here. To get that vision, it is not merely our concept of man that must change but our behaviour too. Sri Ramakrishna said . 'I now really find that it is the Lord who is moving about in the forms of men, sometimes a saint, sometimes a fraud, at other times a knave. But all of them are God and none but God. So I say, God in the form of saints, God in the form of knave, God in the form of libertine.'

Sri Ramakrishna gave the spirit of service through these hints, the detailed work was left to his worthy disciple who gave it a language. Thus, Swami Vivekananda raised *Karma-Yoga* to the

status of an independent path. Down the ages it was considered to be secondary to *Jnana* and *Bhakti*, inspite of Sri Krsna's clear opinion (*Gita* III, 19) that through detached work alone the highest goal could be reached. Not only did Swami Vivekananda consider *Karma-Yoga* as the religious path suitable for this age but he exhorted people to adopt it without a shadow of doubt. The life work of Swami Vivekananda is to make spirituality intensely practical.

How this spirit of worship Swami Vivekananda transmitted to the service of the Motherland has been finely pointed out by Sister Nivedita in her 'Introduction' to *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* : 'Here is the crowning realization, into which all others are resolvable. When, in his lecture on "The Work Before Us", the Swami adjures all to aid him in the building of a temple wherein every worshipper in the land can worship, a temple whose shrine shall contain the word *OM*, there are some of us who catch in the utterance the glimpse of a still greater temple—India herself the Motherland, as she already exists—and see the paths, not of the Indian churches alone, but of all Humanity, converging there, at the foot of that sacred place wherein is set the symbol that is no symbol, the name that is beyond all sound. It is to this, and not away from it, that all the paths of all the worships, and all the religious systems lead. India is at one with the most puritan faiths of the world in her declaration that progress is from seen to unseen, from the many to the One, from the low to the high, from the form to the formless, and never in the reverse direction. She differs only in having a word of sympathy and promise for every sincere conviction, wherever and whatever it may be, as constituting a step in the great ascent.'

WORK AND WORKERS

Spiritual Motivation

What type of service did Swami Vivekananda want his people to render to society ? And what type of training for workers did he visualize to work out that scheme ? Religion is his fulcrum for all social action. His 'Practical Vedanta' or service of society with a religious motivation is, in a sense, an original contribution. It is not that the idea was not there. But it was Swami Vivekananda who forcefully presented the idea of looking upon man

as God and serve him. Philosophically, there are two ways of looking upon the world The negative way is to reject it, it being an illusion in the form in which it presents itself before us. The positive way is to look to its fundamental basis, the ultimate Reality which alone exists This is the deification of the world as preached by Swami Vivekananda, as against the traditional negation of it. Both are true from different standpoints, but the deification has a tremendous social value. In all spheres, understanding among different groups is reached by overlooking the differences and stressing upon the common points. Men are equal, we say. We know they are not so in the purely physical sense but they are so in a special sense From the standpoint of worship, too, this attitude is valid. To consider God as man will be idolatry, but to look upon man as God will be symbology and symbology is an accepted mode of worship in the religious system. So hard work with unselfishness plus the particular attitude is all that is necessary in this worship.

This worshipful attitude to men as God has been described as the socialization of the Absolute The realization of the ultimate Reality is true religion, which in its expression is both individual and social. This realization is individual but men of realization see God everywhere as the Spirit, as the sum total of all souls. Seeing God in society thus becomes a spiritual discipline. When God is thus realized, service of society becomes service of God It is then a distinct method of *sadhana*, which is nothing but the imitation of saint's experience and hence is not insincere. That is why vedanta teaches the deification of the world, which idea has been very forcefully presented by Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on 'God in everything '

As a result of this attitude, there arises a tremendous social gain. The individual benefits from it by being free from the dichotomy of sacred and secular, of contemplation and action. Men of social awareness find it more conducive. The difficulty of forgetting God or losing the poise in the crowded programme may be overcome by constant awareness and intensification of the attitude or by combining work and worship. The three stages of 'work and worship', 'work as worship' and 'work is worship' come to a spiritual aspirant step by step. Even the great devotees, who did not consciously follow work as a discipline, come to the realization that whatever we do is nothing but worship This

spiritual method of seeing the Divine in society and serving it is suited to the modern temper and is also available to those who lack faith. Socialization is a modern fad. Awareness of it is imperative for modern minds. And as Victor Hugo puts it, 'Nothing is so powerful in the world as an idea whose time has come.' That is the reason of the tremendous popularity and impact of Swami Vivekananda's *Karma-Yoga* and 'Practical Vedanta'.

This stress on spiritulity is not merely for social workers; it is to play an important part in the live of those who are to be regenerated He felt that mass education must not disturb the religion of the people, which is essential for a complete life and which fosters the higher virtues so necessary for society. In all their changes, the central point is spirituality. True religion must light up the mind of man and give him all the strength that is necessary. So Swami Vivekananda said :

> "Your duty at present is to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village, and make the people understand that mere sitting about idly won't do any more. Make them understand their real condition and say, "O ye brothers, all arise ! Awake ! How much longer would you remain asleep !" Go and advise them how to improve their own condition, and make them comprehend the sublime truths of the sastras, by presenting them in a lucid and popular way. . . Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the Brahmanas. Initiate all, even down to the Candalas, in these fiery *mantras*. Also instruct them in simple words, about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture, etc.' (*Swami Vivekananda on India and Her Problems,* Compiled by Swami Nirvedananda, pp. 71-73).

Patriotism

Swami Vivekananda was a lover of his country. To him patriotism was an expression of a true worship and loving service of fellowmen, a means to the realization of the highest. It was merging of one's whole personality into the soul of his people, Everyone has to be a patriot. And what is his definition of a patriot ?

'They talk of patriotism, . . . First feel from the heart, . .

Through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates; love is the gate to all the secrets of the universe. Feel, therefore, my would-be reformers, my would-be patriots! Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heartbeats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your dearest ones, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. III, pp. 225-26)

Because of his deep love for his country, Swami Vivekananda has rightly been described as the 'Patriot-Monk of India.'

Sister Nivedita graphically describes in her book *The Master as I Saw Him* (pp. 46-49) the dual aspect of Swami Vivekananda's genius as a lover of his country and as a teacher of spirituality and the inevitable conflict born of them :

> 'From the moment of my landing in India, howeher, I found something quite unexpected underlying all this. . . . It was the personality of my Master himself, in all the fruitless torture and struggle of a lion caught in net.
>
> 'But wherein lay the struggle? Whence came the frequent sense of being baffled and thwarted? Was it a growing consciousness of bodily weakness, conflicting with the growing clearness of a great purpose? . . . Banished to the Himalayas with shattered health, at the very moment when his power had reached its height he had written a letter to an English friend which was a cry of despair.
>
> 'To what was the struggle actually due? Was it the terrible effort of translating what he had called the "superconscious" into the common life? Undoubtedly he had been born to a task which was in the respect of heroic difficulty. Nothing in this world is so terrible as to abandon the safe paths of accepted ideals, in order to work out some new realization, by methods

apparently in conflict with the old. . . Certainly in years to come, in the last five and a half years, particularly, which were his crowning gift to his own people, he stood for work without attachment, or work for personal ends, as one of the highest expressions of the religious life. And for the best time in the history of India an order of monks found themselves banded together, with their faces set primarily towards the evolution of new forms of civic duty ?

How to Reconstruct India

Much before the independence of India Swami Vivekananda appeared on the Indian firmament with his original ideas for reconstructing India. The paramount necessity was to arouse enthusiasm of the enduring type coupled with a clear nation of the future. An understanding of the Indian temperament and fundamental aspiration has to be there for proper propelling of the national zeal. Tremendous *rajasic* mentality had to be created and to hold the zeal together a consciousness of India as a synthetic whole had to be presented before the society. Lack of unity is a bane to newly freed zealous countries, as we see before our eyes. Unity will be achieved, true nationhood would be a fact, if we could create an inner consciousness of a common ideal, common struggle and common feeling among the different constituents of the nation. Patriotism is a means but often it is bedeviled by parochialism because of its stress on group interest. Unity of purpose and striving could be brought in India minus the bad effects, if it could be inspired by a higher ideal The spiritual quest itself could be made the motive power of Indian nationalism, spiritual realization being its goal. Improving of material standards of life, economic growth, industrial development, scientific progress,—all would find their proper place in the total scheme of all round regeneration of India. That is what Swami Vivekananda wanted. So he exhorted Indians to live up to the ideal to bring about the model society where material and spiritual forces are well balanced. True spiritualization is a slow process. But a mere political nationality is apt to be belligerent to keep the internal different forces together for work, if it is based on pacts and compromises. In trying to accumulate strength for progress, tremendous *rajasic* zeal has to be released, material happiness has to be brought, it is true, but not at the cost of the spiritual ideal,

Then India will have an imperfect civilization and will collapse sooner than expected like some of the predominantly materialistic civilisations of old. This danger of rejection of India's spiritual culture may come from three directions, he thought in the last years of the last century · (a) The land could be converted to an exotic religion. (b) The lower castes could create a different religion. (c) A totally non-religious group could arise. The first, the efforts to convert the country to Christianity has failed as failed Islam in olden days The danger of the second has also passed off. The third danger of materialistic secular democracy and extremely anti-spiritual dialetic materialism still continues. The first will bring in indifference and the aggressive second is bound to bring in conflict and civil war. The only solution lies in their being spiritualized retaining most of their economic and social programme. With this perspective, we can very easily understand why Swami Vivekananda was so anxious to retain the spiritual values. The metood he suggested was to make the motive power of the national upheaval to be idealistic in nature and content and practice of *Karma Yoga*, detached unselfish action, for workers. Aiming high, they will least practice enlightended self-interest as against gross selfihness. As it is commonly said, the most likely way of achieving a goal is not aiming at the goal itself but at some goal beyond it. Of course, for this a section of the people must be essentially dedicated to the spiritual ideal and will at the same time embody the best aspirations of the nation. They are not to be otherworldy but disinterestedly serviceful. They will be the fittest instruments to uphold the spiritual ideal before the nation. Not only that, the ideal has to be preached to other nations to bring the world round this deal, thus paving the way for a peaceful, lasting, spiritual civilization With that idea, he founded the Ramakrishna Math and Mission which would serve as the suitable model.

Heritage

In regenerating India, Swami Vivekananda often spoke of going back to the past cultural heritage. Why did he glorify the past so much ? Swami Vivekananda's idea was that to create enthusiasm in a huge nation it was necessary to arouse the national pride. And what have Indians to be proud of except this cultural heritage ? He said :

'Nowadays, everybody blames those who constantly look back to their past. It is said that so much looking back to the past, is the cause of all India's woe. To me, on the contrary, it seems that the opposite is true. So long as they forget the past, the Hindu nation remained in a state of stupor; and as soon as they have begun to look into their past, there is on every side a fresh manifestation of life.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. IV, p. 324).

The hypnosis of centuries of subjections made Indian weak. So rang out his message of strength based on the idea of superiority of India's cultural heritage 'Back to the Upanisads !' he cried, 'Back to the strengthening, life-giving teaching of the Upanisads !' 'He who thinks that he is weak is weak : he who believes that he is strong is already invincible !' The *Gita* to him, was 'a mine of strength.' India would arise anew when they assimilar this strength, this faith of the Upanisads. The sense of superiority of their culture heritage would remove the hypnosis and put energy in his countrymen. That was his idea.

India can remain united only on the common ground of her sacred tradition. He said, "The common ground that we have is our sacred traditions, our religion. Nationality, to him, was not merely political, of having powers and rights and privileges but a sacred ideal 'whose inmost striking was to expreess its own conception of ideal manhood.' The political significance of nationality was necessary but his stress was on unity based on heart and spirit rather than on mind. He was international in outlook because of his realization of the oneness of existence. Yet he was the very personification of the true Indian spirit.

Imitation

It is not required of modern India, according to him, to change her social or religious institutions, but all that was required was to put them in a position to work out the current problems in the light of the national ideals. He was against meaningless imitation. He knew that our Indian social system has many defects and they must be rectified. But he was against throwing off of our own age-old system and borrowing wholesale any new system including that of the West. He said :

'A child of but yesterday, destined to die the day after tomorrow comes to me and asks me to change all my plans and if I hear the advice of that baby and change all my surroundings according to his ideas I myself should be a fool, and no one else. Much of the advice that is coming to us from different countries is similar to this. Tell these wise-acres, "I will hear you when you have made a stable society yourselves. You cannot hold on to one idea for two days, you quarrel and fail; you are born like moths in the spring and die like them in five minutes. You come up like bubbles and burst like bubbles too. First form a stable society like ours. First make laws and institutions that remain undiminished in their power through scores of centuries. Then will be the time to talk on the subject with you, but till then, my friend, you are only a giddy child.' *The Complete Works*, Vol. III, p. 133).

Swami Vivekananda's love for India was unlimited. To him, all India was sacred and wonderful and he defended even Indian manners and customs often while training up his Western disciples :

"The Swami was defiant in the defence of the culture of his people. He was ready to beat down mercilessly any other than a living interest in everything connected with the people of his land and thundered against anything that sounded like patronizing. He would turn upon the Western disciples if they were guilty of stupid criticism. He demanded that they should come to the task of the understanding of India without prepossessions and with sincerity, and that India must be understood in the light of the spiritual vision. He upset any notion they might have had as to his country being either old or effete, and he often said that only a youthful nation could so readily have assimilated the ideals of a foreign culture. He made them see India, in the light of its ideals and ideas, as young, vital and powerful, as one throughout in the religious vision. He made them see that India's culture was incomparable, being developed through thousands of years of trial and experimentation till it had attained the highest standard ever reached by humanity, and consequently possessed an

unshakable stability and strength. He made them see the *why* of every Indian custom. And they saw that though India was poor, it was clean and that poverty was honoured in the land where religion was understood to be renunciation, and that here poverty was not necessarily associated with vice, as it is so often in the West. To the Swami all India was sacred and wonderful. And later on as he wandered with his disciples from city to city and province to province, he would recount to them the glories and the beauties of the land. The Swami was anxious that his Western disciples should make an impartial study of Indian problems. They were not only to see the glories, but also to have especially a clear understanding of the problems of the land and bring the ideals and methods of Western scientific culture to bear upon the task of finding a solution.' *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* : by His Eastern and Western Disciples, pp. 553-54.

Swami Vivekananda was fully conscious of the merits of the Western ideal but he wanted India to retain her feet firm on the ground of her own idea and then learn the useful things from other nations Like his Master, he was a great harmonizer. He wanted the combination of the best of the West and the East, of materialism and spirituality, of action and contemplation. So he said :

'We talk foolishly against material civilization. The grapes are sour. Even taking all that foolishly for granted, in all India there are, say, a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. Now, for the spiritualization of these, must three hundred millions be sunk in savagery and starvation ? Why should any starve ? How was it possible for the Hindus to have been conquered by the Mohammedans ? It was due to the Hindus' ignorance of material civilization . . . Material civilization, nay, even luxury is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread ! Bread ! I do not believe in a God, who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven ! Pooh ! India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priestcraft is to be removed. No priestcraft, no social tyranny ! More bread, more

opportunity for everybody! Our young fools organize meetings to get more power from the English. They only laugh. None deserves liberty who is not ready to give liberty.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol IV, p 368)

Education

In bringing in the regeneration of India, Swami Vivekananda put the maximum emphasis on training and education. Education is the pivot of Swami Vivekananda's idea of reform. 'Education is the panacea for all social evils', he used to say. So in trying to improve the lot of the socially oppressed, he was not enamoured of the prevalent social reforms, for they were only surface reforms. He wanted to go deeper and bring in a total change in their outlook and thus root out the cause of degeneration And what was the method for bringing in that total change which removes all dullness, makes men aware of a higher and better life? It was education He wrote:

'Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people and I used to shed tears. What made the difference in Education was the answer I got. Through education, faith in one's own self, and through faith in one's own self the inherent Brahman is waking up in them while the Brahman in us is gradually becoming dormant.

'In New York I used to observe the Irish colonists come,—down-trodden, haggard looking destitute of all possessions at home, penniless and wooden-headed,—with their only belongings, a stick and a bundle of rags hanging at the end of it, fright is their steps, alarm in their eyes. A different spectacle in six months,—the man walks upright, his attire is changed. In his eyes and steps there is no more sign of fright. What is the cause? Our Vedanta says that that Irishman was kept surrounded by contempt in his own country—the whole of nature was telling him with one voice,—"Pat, you have no more hope, you are born a slave and will remain so." Having been thus told from his birth, Pat, believed in it and hypnotised himself that he was very low, and the Brahman in him shrank away. While no sooner had he landed in America

than he heard the shout going up on all sides,—"Pat, you are a man as we are, it is man who has done all, a man like you and me can do everything : have courage !" Pat raised his head and saw that it was so, the Brahman within woke up, nature herself spoke, as it were,—"Arise awake, and stop not till the goal is reached " (*Swami Vivekananda on India and Her Problems*, Compiled by Swami Nirvedananda, pp. 68-69)

Education in its turn makes the mind free from all superstitions and hypnosis before tyranny and oppression and so freedom was his spiritual goal as well as prescription for social upliftment.

Educate and give liberty was his prescription for the masses. He said :

'The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolizing of the whole education and intelligence of the land among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it by spreading education among the masses.' (Swami Vivekananda : *Education*, p. 69)

'Who will bring the light to them—who will travel from door to door bringing education to them ? Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord will show you the way Him I call a *mahatman* (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a *duratman* (wicked soul). . . So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them ! I call those men who strut about in their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long as they do not do anything for those two hundred millions who are now to better than hungry savages ! (*The Complete Works*, Vol. V, p. 58)

Qualities to Imbibe

On various occasions, Swami Vivekananda recommended various qualities for the all round development of social workers. But these same qualities are to be implanted in all the members of society. So he spoke about the development of strength, confidence, faith, zeal, fearlessness and other qualities The first and foremost duty of a social worker is to rouse self respect, zeal and enthusiasm

in the people. Details of social activities will then very easily be looked after. To do that man must be made aware of the infinite source of energy lying within him. Divinity of the self is to be preached first. Every other thing that human beings need, such as economic rehabilitation and so on, should be offered only after the human mind has been flooded with the idea of man's true being.

For service, Swami Vivekananda visualized two types of workers, monastic and lay, both having purity of character, perfect unselfishness, tremendous missionary zeal and a higher spiritual outlook. Monks are specially to be trained to live and preach the universal religion of Vedanta in foreign countries as well as in India. The Indian work of monks will have a bias for service, physical, intellectual and spiritual. The lay workers will specially serve in the so-called secular fields. He did not consider sacred and secular service to be different. Sister Nivedita nicely puts in her *Religion and Dharma* that the grand ideal of *sannyasa* should be practised in civic life too. Scientists, executives, social and political workers, all should have the social application of *sannyasa* by practising detachment with zeal and determination coupled with complete unselfishness.

Since Swami Vivekananda wanted specially the youth to serve the nation, he asked them to build up a strong body and an equally strong character. He said, 'It is character that pays everywhere.' 'Men, believing young men, sincere to the backbone are wanted. A hundred such and the world becomes revolutionized.'

To be a true reformer, he said, three things are necessary. 'The first to feel; do you really feel for your brothers ? . . . Are you full of that idea of sympathy ? If you are, that is only the first step. You must think next if you have found any remedy. The old ideas may be all superstition—but in and around these masses of superstition are nuggets of gold and truth. Have you discovered means by which to keep the gold alone, without any of the dross ? One more thing is necessary. What is your motive ? Are you sure that you are not actuated by greed of gold, by thirst for fame or power ?' (*The Complete Works*, Vol IV, pp. 158-59).

'Renunciation and service are the national ideals of India', said Swami Vivekananda. He wanted national workers to develop the spirit. 'The essential thing is renunciation—without renunciation none can pour his whole heart in working for others. The

man of renunciation sees all with an equal eye, and devotes himself to the service of all Nothing will be able to resist truth and love and sincerity.' (*Swami Vivekananda on India and Her Problems* : Compiled by Swami Nirvedananda, p. 83)

Strength

Strength was a special message of Swami Vivekananda It was a central principle round which he gathered his ideas. It was he who gave the famous equation, 'Strength is religion, religion is strength.' Strength is the watchword of our scriptures. Quoting the *Katha Upanisad*, he exhorted them to be 'optimistic, strong, firm and intelligent'. Strength is necessary, for it gives ability to follow a programme.

'Weakness is sin', he said Inhumanity and selfishness are born of weakness. 'We lie, steal, kill and commit other crimes because we are weak ' In this enthusiasm, he dramatically said that playing football is better than reading the *Gita*. He did not want India to be militarily weak, though he was proud of India which never went out to conquer. His exhortation of strength was not a glorification of mere force of violence It is not destructive. It is for making peace. 'I have always spoken of strength, not of revenges', he said.

The other factor in the composition of the strength of his idea is the intellectual power Education is not the collection of information but liberation of inexhaustible inner potentialities of man. But, of course, the unfailing abiding source of strength is the Atman and spiritual strength. It is a tremendous ethical force generating harmony and inspiring heroic self-sacrifice. His ideals for the people of India were strength, courage, fearlessness and service with the Lord at the centre of all work. These characterize true manhood Manliness, according to him, is the whole of piety. To follow strength and fearlessness in all circumstances is manliness. It is to uphold whatever is true and uplifting. This is *dharma*. This is righteousness To act manly was the agitation of the moment too.

As a vedantin, he knew that real strength lies in the Self. The body has its limitations, the mind, too, is not peramount. But it is the Atman which is the repository of all strength, all hope, all energy. By attuning oneself to the self one could gain strength hope and energy. This is why he exhorted his followers to spread

this message of the glory of the Atman from door to door.

Self-confidence is the one virtue he wanted his countrymen to imbibe. It was necessary for the progressive and the backward, for the educated and the ignorent, for the rich and the poor. In trying to assert self-confidence, even if a man become proud, Vivekananda would not mind. He went further in his passionate moments. Sister Nivedita mentions him saying : 'Yes ! the older I grow, the more everything seems to me to lie in manliness. This is my new gospel. Do even evil like a man ! Be wicked, if you must, on a grand scale !'

An important aspect of real strength, of manliness, is the capacity to face the problems of life. He was all for fighting. Nature, for all progress in civilization came through it. He said :

> 'It is rebellion against Nature, struggle for self-preservation, that differentiates Spirit from Matter Where there is life, there is struggle, there is the manifestation of the Spirit. Read the history of all nations and you will find that that is the Law It is only this nation which drifts with Nature, and you are more dead than alive. You are in a hypnotized state. For that last thousand years or more, you are told that you are weak, you are nobodies, you are good for nothing and so on, and you have come to believe yourself as such.' (*Life of Swami Vivekananda, op. cit.*, pp. 190-91).
>
> 'At one time, before the trip to Amarnath, when someone had asked him, "Sire ! what should we do when we see the strong oppress the weak ?" he had made reply. "Why, thrash the strong, of course !" "Even forgiveness", he said on a similar occasion, "if weak and passive, is not true : fight is better. *Forgive* when you can bring legions of angels to an easy victory. . . . The world is a battle field, fight your way out." Another asked him, "Swamiji, ought one to die in defence of right, or ought one to learn never to react ?" "I am for no reaction", replied the Swami slowly, and after a long pause added, "—for *sannyasins*. Self-defence for the house-holder !" (*ibid.*, pp 593-94).

Gandhiji has popularized the idea of non-violence being applied in national life. Swami Vivekananda was all for sacrifice which is a higher virtue, but still he exhorted the youth of India to

cultivate the qualities suitable for a competitive life. He said : 'Darwin's theory is applicable to the animal and vegetable kingdoms, but not to the human kingdom where reason and knowledge are highly developed. In our saints and ideal men we find no trace of struggle whatsoever, and no tendency to rise higher or grow stronger by the destruction of others. There we find sacrifice instead. The more one can sacrifice the greater is he. The struggle of a rational man is with his internal nature. The more he succeeds in controlling the mind the greater is he. On being questioned, "Why then do you emphasize so much on the need of our physical improvement ?"—the Swami thundered : "Are you men ? You are no better than animals, satisfied with eating, sleeping and propagating, and haunted by fear ! If you had not had in you a little rationality, you would have been turned into quadrupeds by this time ! Devoid of self-respect, you are full of jealously among yourselves, and have made yourselves objects of contempt to foreigners ! Throw aside your vain bragging (your theories and so forth, and reflect calmly on the doings and dealings of your everyday life. Because you are governed by animal nature, therefore, I teach you to seek for success first in the struggle for existence, and to attend to the building up of your physique, so that you shall be able to wrestle all the better with your mind. The physically weak, I say again and again, are unfit for the realization of the Self ! When once the mind is controlled and man is the master of his self, it does not matter whether the body remains strong or not, for then he is not dominated by it." (*ibid.*, pp. 615-16).

It shows that he was aware of the higher ideal and wanted the best among us to practise it. From a philosophical height of detachment, he viewed the Indian method as fightlessness. 'You are quite wrong', he said again, 'when you think that fighting is a sign of growth. It is not so at all. Absorption is the sign. Hinduism is the very genius of absorption. We have never cared for fighting Of course, we could strike a blow now and then, in defence of our homes ! That was right. But we never cared for fighting for its own sake. Everyone had to learn that. So let these races of new comers whirl on ! They'll all be taken into Hinduism in the end !' (*ibid.*, p 651).

A very important aspect of 'facing Nature' is to cultivate the restraint of the senses. It is not the strength and freedom that

make one glide along easy and unprincipled path that is ultimately beneficial to the individual and the society. So mastery over the mind and the senses must be acquired and the power of deep concentration must be developed. So he said :

> "Herein is the difference between man and the animals—man has the greater power of concentration. The difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration. This is the only difference.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. VI, p. 37).
> 'How has all the knowledge in the world been gained but by the concentration of the powers of the mind ? The world is ready to give up its secrets if we only know how to knock, how to give it the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow come through concentration. There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point, that is the secret.' (*ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 130-31)

Fearlessness is the one quality, Swami Vivekananda liked to see in the youth of the country. It is the greatest glory of the Upanisads, that they visualized the highest Reality as *Abhayam*, fearlessness itself.

Faith is the other most important quality which Swami Vivekananda wanted our people to imbibe. The Upanisads and the *Gita* are full of praise for cultivating this faith. 'Whatever one's faith so one is', says the Upanisad. 'A man of faith gets knowledge', says the *Gita*. So he said

> 'Faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith, faith in God—this is the secret of greatness If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological gods, and in all the gods which foreigners have now and again introduced into midst, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith in yourselves, and stand up on that faith and be strong; that is what we need' (*ibid*, Vol III, p. 190).

As Goethe puts it, 'Give me the benefit of your convictions, if

you have any, but keep your doubts to yourself, for I have enough of my own.' The world wants to hear a man of conviction and if that conviction is based on his realization of man's fundamental nature, his appeal becomes irresistible. That is the secret of Swami Vivekananda's tremendous impact on scores of people in the country and out-side. 'All the scholastic scaffolding falls', said Napoleon, 'as a ruined edifice, before one single word—faith.'

Swami Vivekananda exhorted even the newly ordained monks to have faith and set themselves to the service of fellow men.

To them, he said, 'Be fearless, be ready from today, to lay down your life for your own *Moksa* and for the good of others. (*Life of Swami Vivekananda, op. cit.*, p. 500).

Monks are to be ideal workers and other social workers, too, must practice the virtue of detachment. 'Again and again he would say that only a great monk can be a great worker. "Only the unimpassioned and unattached do most for the world" he would say. "Who can claim to be a greater worker than Buddha or Christ ?" In the Swami's eyes there was no work which was secular. All work was sacred. All work was worship. "We must combine the practicality and the culture of the finest citizenship with the love of poverty, purity and thorough renunciation that characterize the true monk and man of God !" (*ibid*, p. 625)

Society

Swami Vivekananda was as much a sociologist as a religious teacher. In one of his letters to a lady-disciple, we get glimpses of his ideas on the origin of custom, widow-remarriage, liberty and the psychology of religious consciousness. In it, he writes .

> '*Risi*, *Muni* or God—none has the power to force an institution on society. When the needs of the times press hard on it, society adopts certain customs for self-preservation. *Rsis* have only recorded those customs. As a man often resorts even to such means as are good for immediate self-protection, but which are very injurious in the future, so also, society not frequently saves itself for the time being, but these immediate means which contributed to its preservation turn out to be terrible in the long-run.'
>
> 'For example, take the prohibition of widow-marriage in our country. Don't think that *Rsis* or wicked men introduced the law pertaining to it. Notwithstanding the desire of men to

keep women completely under their control, they never could succeed in introducing those laws without betaking themselves to the aid of a social necessity of the time.'

Similar is the case with the caste system, and other social customs.

'So, if it be necessary to change any social custom, the necessity underlying it should be found out first of all; and by altering it the custom will die of itself. Otherwise, no good will be done by condemnation or praise.'

'Liberty', said Swami Vivekananda, 'does not certainly mean the absence of obstacles in the path of misappropriation of wealth etc. by you and me, but it is our natural right to be allowed to use own body, intelligence or wealth according to our will, without doing harm to others; and all the members of a society ought to have the same opportunity for obtaining wealth, education, or knowledge . . .'

'Who constitute society ? The millions, or you, I, and a few others of the upper classes ?'

' "Raise self by self." Let each one workout one's own salvation. It is freedom in every way, i e., advance towards *Mukti* is the worthiest gain of man. To advance towards freedom—physical, mental and spiritual—and help others to do so is the supreme prize of man Those social rules which stand in the way of the unfoldment of this freedom are injurious, and steps should be taken to destroy them speedily. Those institutions should be encouraged by which men advance in the path of freedom ' (*ibid* , p. 618-20)

His concept of service led him to a concept of society which was the fore-runner of socialist thoughts in India. He was a socialist, 'not because it is a perfect system, but because half a loaf is better than no bread. The other systems have been tried and found wanting Let this one be tried—if for nothing else, for the novelty of the thing.' But he was not a socialist in the ordinary sense of the term, for he was anxious for all round welfare to retain the spiritual values

He wanted the combination of all that is best in every old social group. He wrote, 'If it is possible to form a state in which

the knowledge of the priest, the culture of the militia, the distributive spirit of the commercial, and the ideal of equality of the rest can all be kept intact, minus their evils, it will be an ideal state.' He thought of harmonizing the two special characteristic of the two important communities of India, the social equality of the Muslims and the thinking faculty of the Hindus and would fondly express this idea with the expression, 'Islamic body and Vedantic brain.' He feared that in the age of the common man there may be lowering of cultural standards. So he wanted abolition of privileges and voluntary sharing of the enjoyable goods of life. It is not merely equal opportunities, it is giving an extra consideration to the poor and the down-trodden. 'Our Mission', he said, 'is for the destitute, the poor and the illiterate peasantry, and labouring classes; and if after everything has been done for them first, there is spare time, then only for the gentry.' (Swami Vivekananda : *Caste, Culture and Socialism*, pp. 84-92).

In social reform, he did not believe in condemnation or in sudden change. Growth is always gradual. 'Take a man from where he stands and from there give him a lift'.

Masses

Swami Vivekananda was one of the earliest leaders who thought about improving the lot of the masses, for it is they who are the backbone of society. So he wrote in a letter :

> 'Preach the idea of elevating the masses by means of a central college, and bringing education as well as religion to the door of the poor by means of missionaries trained in this college Suppose some dis-interested *sannyasins*, bent on doing good to others go from village to village, disseminating education, and seeking in various ways to better the condition of all down to the *Candala*, through oral teaching, and by means of maps, cameras, globes and such other accessories,—can't that bring forth good in time ?' (*Swami Vivekananda on India and Her Problems, op. cit.*, p. 72).
>
> 'Keep the motto before you—"Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion." Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But, alas ! nobody ever did anything for them. . . Can you raise them ? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate

spiritual nature ? can you become an Occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, working energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts ? This is to be done and will do it.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. V, pp. 29-30).

He exhorted our young men to render service to their fellow-men. In one of his letters written from America, he wrote to Alasinga Perumal, 'Trust not to the so-called rich, they are more dead than alive. The hope lies in you—in the meek, the lowly, but the faithful Have faith in the Lord; no policy, it is nothing. Feel for the miserable and look up for help—it shall come. I have travelled twelve years with this load in my heart and this idea in my head. I have gone from door to door of the so-called rich and great. With a bleeding heart I have crossed half the world to this strange land seeking for help. The Lord is great. I know He will help me. I may perish of cold or hunger in this land, but I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed.'

'It is not the work of a day', he wrote further, 'and the path is full of the most deadly thorns. But Parthasarathi is ready to be our *Sarathi*, we know that; and in His name and with eternal faith in Him, set fire to the mountain of misery that has been heaped upon India for ages—and it shall be burned down Come then, look it in the face, brethren, it is a grand task and we are so low. But we are the sons of Light and children of God. Glory unto the Lord, we will succeed.' (*Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 70-71).

What are his ideas about mass contact which is a popular slogan now ? Swami Vivekananda's exhortation to his educated countrymen was full of suggestions for mass communication. For that, qualified workers are of utmost importance. They must be strong, vigorous, believing youngmen, fired with the ideal and armed with the spirit of sacrifice and selflessness. The content of this education will be secular as well as spiritual knowledge. For that, he wanted to set in motion a machinery that would bring noble ideas to the door of everybody. The villagers have to be taught hygiene etc. and they also must be conversant with the

cultural heritage and also the day-to-day happenings. Education will be best, if it is given through religion. The medium should be the vernaculars. Education should be given orally by telling stories, history, etc. and occasionally through different village theatrical programmes. Globes, charts, posters, etc. have to be profusely used. Swami Vivekananda was one of the earliest thinkers to suggest the use of modern methods including the audio-visual. He wanted the talks to be simple, interesting and indirect. The teachers must go to the villagers instead of expecting the villagers to come to them. As a technique, they must know how to come down to the level of the villagers. This is a tremendous task But this is a duty. This is their debt to the community.

Caste

Pursuing his concept of service, Swami Vivekananda devoted himself to discussing the burning questions of the masses, of the caste system and of women. The underlying principles of social organizations have to be understood before a social programme is evolved To him, caste in its broad sense of division was a universal phenomenon. It is in the nature of things that societies will be divided into groups. When they are crystallized and become hereditary, they are called castes. Mr. Packard in his well-known book *The Status Seekers* cites cxamples of hereditary stratification of professions from American business world. In many countries, it is money, instead of heredity, that brings in the division In modern society we take an individual as a unit whereas in India a community embodied in caste was accepted as a unit. A man, though not free to go up the ladder alone, could do so along with the group. He pointed out :

> 'The law of caste in every other country takes the individual man or woman the sufficient unit Wealth, power, intellect or beauty sufficies for the individual to leave the status of birth and scramble up to anywhere he can. Here the unit is all the members of a caste community. Here too, one has every chance of rising from a low caste to a higher or to the highest; only, in this birth-land of altruism, one is compelled to take his whole caste along with him. In India, you cannot on account of your wealth, power or any other merit, leave your

fellows behind and make common cause with your superiors. If you want to rise to a higher caste in India, you have to elevate all your caste first, and then there is nothing in your onward path to hold you back.'

The caste system served the Indian society well in times of need by providing it a great measure of stability. 'No doubt', says Sydney Law in this *Vision of India* about *caturvarna* 'that is the main cause of the fundamental stability and contentment by which Indian society has been braced up for centuries against the shock of politics and the cataclysms of nature.'

While Swami Vivekananda thus defended the original purpose of the caste system, he denounced the abuses into which it had fallen. The crystallized, hereditary caste system of the present day, the 'don't touchism', received its strongest condemnation at his hands. But he believed in levelling up rather than levelling down. 'The solution is not by bringing down the higher, but by raising the lower up to the level of the higher.' 'The only way to bring about the levelling of castes is to appropriate the culture, the education, which is the strength of the higher castes.'

In trying to remove the evils of social differences, Swami Vivekananda was against all strife, for that will weaken the nation. So he said :

"Therefore, it is no use fighting among the castes. What good will it do ? It will divide us all the more, weaken us all the more, degrade us all the more. The solution is not by bringing down the higher, but by raising the lower up to the level of the higher. And that is the line of work that is found in all our books, inspite of what you may hear from some people whose knowledge of their own scriptures and whose capacity to understand the mighty plans of the ancients are only zero. What is the plan ? The ideal at one end is the Brahmana and the ideal at the other end is the Candala, and the whole work is to raise the Candala up to the Brahmana. Slowly and slowly you find more and more privileges granted to them. *Swami Vivekananda on India and Her Problems, op. cit.*, p. 84).

Swami Vivekananda was against classwar. Instead, he

wanted to bring out the best qualities of the higher and privileged castes and classes. He was not prepared to denounce the forward groups for their progress.

While describing the role of Brahmana, he said : "It is true he was the earliest preacher to the Indian races, he was the first to renounce everything in order to attain to the higher realization of life, before others could reach to the idea. It was not his fault that he marched ahead of the other castes. Why did not the other castes so understand and do as they did ? Why did they sit down and be lazy, and let the Brahmanas win the race ? (*Ibid.*, pp. 86-87).

'But it is one thing' he said, 'to gain an advantage, and another thing to preserve it for evil use. Whenever power is used for evil it becomes diabolical; it must be used for good only. So this accumulated culture of ages of which the Brahmana has been the trustee, he must now give to the people at large, and it was because he did not give it to the people, that the Mohammedan invasion was possible. It was because he did not open this treasury to the people from the beginning, that for a thousand years we have been trodden under the heels of every one who chose to come to India, it was through that we have become degraded, and the first task must be to break open the cells that hide the wonderful treasures which our common ancestors accumulated; bring them out, and give them to everybody, and the Brahmana must be the first to do it. There is an old superstition in Bengal that if the cobra that bites, sucks out his own poison from the patient, the man must survive. Well then, the Brahmana must suck out his own poison.' (*Ibid*).

What Swami Vivekananda wanted is the abolition of all privileges based on caste. He went further in his lectures on 'Privilege' and 'Vedanta and Privilege' and said that all types of privileges based on birth, health, education and spirituality are based on tyranny and exploitation. So he said :

> "It is in the nature of society to form itself into groups, and what will go will be these privileges ! Caste is a natural order. I can perform on duty in social life, and you another; you can govern a country, and I can mend a pair of old shoes, but that is no reason why you are greater than I, for can you mend my shoes ? Can I govern the country ? I am

clever in mending shoes, you are clever in reading Vedas, that is no reason why you should trample on my head; why if one commits murder should he be praised and if another steals an apple why should he be hanged ? This will have to go.' (*Ibid.*, p. 79-80).

If at all privileges are necessary, the balance must tilt towards the backward. So he said :

'If the Brahmana has more aptitude for learning on the grounds of heredity than the Pariah, spend no money on the Brahmana's education, but spend all on the Pariah. Give to the weak, for there all the gift is needed; If the Brahmin is born clever, he can educate himself without help . . . . This is justice and reason as I understand it.' (*Ibid.*, p. 82-83).

The philosophy of Vedanta can give back people their lost self-respect if properly cultivated.

'Each Hindu, I say, is a brother to every other, and it is we who have degraded them by our outcry, "Don't touch," "Don't touch" ! And so the whole country has been plunged to the utmost depth of meanness, cowardice and ignorance. These men have to be lifted, words of hope and faith have to be proclaimed to them We have to tell them, "You are also men like us and you have all the rights that we have." (*Ibid*).

Women

In trying to define the national ideal and suggesting remedies for social evils, Swami Vivekananda's attention was naturally drawn to the plight of women. He wanted their progress, for the progress of a nation depends upon the progress of its women. He wrote about the imperative need of women's progress in the following way :

"All nations have attained greatness, by paying proper respect to the women That country and that nation which do not respect the women have never become great, nor will ever be in future. The principal reason why your race has so much

degenerated is that you had no respect for these living images of Sakti. Manu says, "Where women are respected there the gods delight; and where they are not, there all works and efforts come to naught." *Manu-Samhita*, III. 56). There is no hope of rise for that family or country where there is no estimation of women, where they live in sadness.' (*Ibid.*, p. 95).

Again he wrote : 'Can you better the condition of your women ? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise you remain as backward as you are now. The uplift of the women, the awakening of the masses, must come first, and then only can any real good come about for the country, for India If the women are raised, then their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country—then will culture, knowledge, power and devotion awaken in the country.' (*Ibid.*, p. 95). But he cautioned that we should not judge their condition through the eyes of others having different standards of morality and outlook on life.

"We should not allow the sudden influx of European criticism and our consequent sense of contrast, to make us acquiesce too readily in the notion of the inequality of our women. Circumstances have forced upon us, for many centuries, the woman's need of protection. This, and not her inferiority, is the true reading of our customs. Could anything be more complete than the equality of boys and girls in our old forest universities ? Read our Sanskrit dramas—read the story of Sakuntala, and see if Tennyson's "Princess" has anything to teach us !'

Again : "In Malabar the women lead in everything. Exceptional cleanliness is apparent everywhere and there is the greatest impetus to learning. When I myself was in that country. I met many women who spoke good Sanskrit, while in the rest of India not one woman in a million can speak it. Mastery elevates and servitude debases. Malabar has never been conquered either by the Protuguese, or by the Mussalmans. The Dravidians were a non-Aryan race of Central Asia, who preceded the Aryans, and those of Southern India were the most civilized. 'Women with

them stood higher than men.' (*Ibid.*, pp. 92-93).

But women's position deteriorated and betterment of their lot was necessary. Regarding this, his view that women must be given education and then 'let them decide their future.' He would however, like the ideal of Sita to be kept up. 'The women of India must grow and develop in the foot-prints of Sita, and that is the only way.' He was enamoured of the Sita ideal and said :

> "Sita is the very type of the true Indian women, for all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Sita; and here she stands these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man, woman, and child, through the length and breadth of the land of Aryavarta .... All our mythology may vanish, even our Vedas may depart, and our Sanskrit language may vanish for ever, but so long as there will be five Hindus living here, even if only speaking the Most vulgar *patois*, there will be the story of Sita present, mark my words. Sita has gone into the very vitals of our race. She is there in the blood of every Hindu man and woman; we are all children of Sita.' (*Ibid.*, p. 89).

'I know,' he further continues, 'that the race that produced Sita—even if it only dreamt of her—has a reverence for woman that is unmatched on the earth. There is many a burden bound with legal tightness on the shoulders of Western woman that is utterly unknown to ours. We have our wrongs and our exceptions certainly, but so have they'. (*Ibid.*, p. 91).

What should be the type of education for girls ? Swami Vivekananda casually mentions some : 'History and the Puranas, religion, arts, science, house-keeping, cooking, sewing, hygiene—the simple essential points in these subjects ought to be taught to our women. It is not good to let them touch novels and fiction. But only teaching rites of worship won't do; their education must be an eye-opener in all matters. Ideal characters must always be presented before the view of the girls to imbue them with a devotion to lofty principles of selflessness. The noble example of Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Lilavati, Khana and Mira should be brought home to their minds and they should be inspired to mould their own lives, in the light of these. Along

with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence. See how grand was the Queen of Jhansi! With such an education women will solve their own problems.'

"We must see to their growing up as ideal matrons of home in time. The children of such mothers will make further progress in the virtues that distinguish the mother. It is only in the homes of educated and pious mothers that great men are born.'

"Studying the present needs of the age it seems imperative to train some of them up in the ideals of renunciation, so that they will take up the vow of lifelong virginity, fired with the strength of that virtue of chastity which is innate in their life-blood from hoary antiquity. Along with that they should be taught sciences and other things which would be of benefit, not only to them but to others as well, and knowing this they would easily learn these things and feel pleasure in doing so. Our motherland requires for her well-being some of her children to become such pure-souled *brahmacarinis*.' (*Ibid.*, pp. 97-99).

Exhortation

Thus, freeing men from the tyranny of hierarchical, hereditary caste and levelling them up, amelioration of sufferings wherever they are, betterment of women, defence of the weak and uplifting the masses to build a radiant society, reconstructing India through 'the development of industry,' 'improved methods of agriculture which is the noblest profession' and all possible help from the West in science and technology—all these were included in Swami Vivekananda's concept of social service He gave the basic ideas, the detailed work was left to the workers. But service has to be undertaken not as levers to power or fame or for a name in history but as service to God Himself to satisfy the yearning of the soul. When one takes up service in this spirit, one can be free from the aberrations that would, otherwise, vitiate the endeavour. This is spirituality. This is practical Vedanta. After explaining the system of Vedanta in his famous Lahore Lecture, Swami Vivekananda exhorts young men to practise this practical

spirituality. He said :

> 'Raise once more that mighty banner of Advaita, for on no other ground can you have that wonderful love, until see that the same Lord is present everywhere. Unfurl the banner of love ! "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached." Arise, arise once more, for nothing can be done without renunciation. If you want to help others, your little self must go . . . . Your ancestors gave up the world for doing great things. At the present time there are men who gave up the world to help their own salvation. Throw away everything, even your own salvation, and go and help others. Ay, you are always talking bold words, but here is practical Vedanta before you. Give up this little life of yours. What matters it if you die of starvation—you and I and thousands like us—so long as this nation lives ? The nation is sinking, the curse of unnumbered millions is on our heads, those to whom we have been giving ditch-water to drink when they have been dying of thirst and while the perennial river of water was flowing past, the unnumbered millions whom we have allowed to starve in sight of plenty, the unnumbered millions to whom we have talked of Advaita and whom we have hated with all our strength, the unnumbered millions for whom we have invented the doctrine of *Lokacara* (usage) to whom we have talked theoretically that we are all the same and all are one with the same Lord, without even an ounce of practice. "Yet, my friends, it must be only in the mind and never in practice !" Wipe off this blot. Arise and awake.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. III, pp. 430-31).

MERITS OF THE CONCEPT

Two Urges

Atmnan viddhi—know thyself—is the command of our sages. *Gnothi Seauton* is the old Greek adage. In India as well as in many other countries of the world, the realization of the Ultimate Reality is put forward as the summum bonum of human life. From the beginning of history the different religions have shown us the way to realization. The Hindu conception of the value of life puts spiritual redemption as the supreme objective.

The pining restlessness of the mystics, their hunger for realization or their impatience with the 'dark night of the soul' indicates the intense yearning of humanity for transcending the limitations of finite existence.

But there is another side of the picture. Man is not all spirit, he has a body and it has its demands. Ministering to these needs is the task of society. So the sociologists, the economists and above all the politicians, all enjoin that every member of society must render service to it. With the intensive propaganda of non-religious doctrines, social betterment for its own sake has become the cry of the reformers whereas spiritual perfection is the eternal cry of the soul Whenever the ethical and spiritual sense has reached higher developments in men, there is a dichotomy of thought; individual and collective These two trends of thought pervade the entire field of human life in modern times. In secular life they manifest as egoism and altruism and in social context they reveal themselves as individualism and socialism.

PROBLEMS OF EXCLUSIVE FOLLOWERS

There is an inner conflict even among the exclusive followers of the two paths Spiritual redemption requires hard training. It depends upon the shifting of our centre of interest from the world of our limited self to the ultimate Reality. That means a complete re-orientation of our outlook on life. All our efforts must be suffused with the idea of the Divine and all work that distracts our mind from it must be shunned. Constant awareness of the Reality slowly takes possession of the aspirant and all other work drops off. He becomes unfit for ordinary work. Even in the preparatory stage he has to live in the presence of God and must have a great longing for Him, which is the main condition for realization. If he is to ask for a boon, he is to ask for God and not for hospitals. But life on earth is a series of compromises. In these days of collective planning and global economics, the society exerts a tremendous influence. A corrupt or backward society drags the ordinary aspirant down from the higher pursuits. So even for the cultivation of spiritual values a good society is essential. That is why the aspirant feels that the kingdom of heaven must be brought down on earth. There might be genuises

who fought against their degrading circumstances and became saints. But for less determined people, the quality of society is a great influencing factor inspite of their idealism. On the other hand, social gospels such as humanism take note only of man and society; and unenlightened by the vision of higher realities, they seek to imprison the spiritual aspirations of man in a narrow mundane sphere. As a result, the unsatiated hunger of the soul manifests itself now and then and the resulting conflict drives many social workers into indecision and inaction. In the absence of an abiding background for their ethical zeal, some turn cynics after a few unpleasant experiences in social service, although they might have started with great enthusiasm in the beginning of their life. The quality of service also often goes down, for the personal factors and self-interest intrude. So the workers feel that to keep the flow of enthusiasm constant and unimpaired, it is necessary to have an enduring faith. And greater amount of constancy and devotion could be mobilized by directing the zeal to a non-material goal.

NECESSITY OF HARMONIZING THE TWO VIEWS

So far we see both are exclusive. Though a section of people can completely ignore the call of their conscience and the other the demands of society, the vast majority of humanity requires both. It may be necessary to have the whole-timers for both the pursuits, people who will be absorbed in one kind of pursuit. They are expected to be the specialists. But for others, a harmony is urgently called for. To meet the conflicting demands and guide the people in their double vocation, a proper philosophy is essential It is a view of life, a philosophy, a faith that gives real value, to all our pursuits, the recognition of which rouses us to action. Such a philosophy can be properly evolved and evaluated, if we know the demands of social workers upon the individual and the complaints they make against religious pursuits.

DEMANDS OF SOCIETY AND CHARGES AGAINST SPIRITUALITY

Social workers demand creative and productive work in the material sense from all its members. For that the focal point of

all the members of society must be society itself. Otherwise the social awareness and the resulting urge will lesson. The social stability being the immedinte concern of the social and political workers, they fear, rightly or wrongly, that the hunger for higher life and the belief in eternal existence after death shift man's interest from social life and thus foster the spirit of individualism. It might have been all right, they say, in the medieval Europe when lack of unity among common man rendered them helpless in changing the whole society and that must have been the reason, according to them, for the good people of those times to cut themselves off from the vicious society and seek perfection in self-culture. But now, to progress on all fronts, a social sense must be created. An urgent awareness of the social problems and a strong determination to solve them require the full attention and energy of every individual. So higher pursuits are considered as obstacles to the realization of these objectives.

ANSWER OF SPIRITUALITY

The spiritual aspirants answer that the religious view of life can be brushed aside only after establishing that the higher reality does not exist and the life after death is not a fact. But that is the province of metaphysics, and not of science or politics. The hunger for the infinite, of a life beyond death, is eternal and universal. Even if it does not conform to the social conceptions of the day, it has every right to live as long as search for reality or truth is not considered a taboo by the temporal authority that finds it inconvenient to its idea of social progress.

FEAR MEANINGLESS

But the fear of the social gospellers is meaningless. Every religion speaks of love and service. This is not for a moment to deny that institutionalized religions have practised social exclusiveness or narrow dogmatism; religions—apart from 'real' religion or as they are distinguished from Religion with a capital 'R' have an immense capacity to raise false issues; instead of promoting spirituality they often take of spiritualism and occultism, and they may also promote obscurantism and illogic. But Religion that integrates the head with the heart can meet science and even spur

science. Spirituality can be the driving force for new discoveries. A man who is truly spiritual and believes that he is the spirit has conquered the fear of death; he can dive to the bottom of the ocean, live in the frozen area to work for his fellow beings. This is the content of spirituality. It is this force that has propelled man over the centuries to his onward march Forgetting this fact, we often tend to deny that the greatest service to humanity has been rendered by people imbued with faith in the Higher Reality. How faith works wonders has been powerfully and graphically presented by Dr. Ramakrishna in his *Recovery of Faith*:

> 'Human societies like human beings live by faith and die when faith disappears. If our society is to recover its health, it must regain its faith. Our society is not beyond curing, for it suffers from divided loyalties, from conflicting urges, from alternating moods of exaltation and despair. This condition of anguish is our reason for hope. We need a faith which will assert the power of spirit over things and find significance in a world in which science and organization seem to have lost their relationship to traditional values.'

SAINTS ALSO WORK

The religions of the world point to an important fact. Men of realization might in the beginning of their pilgrimage negate the world, but as they advance, *Karma* develops with the preponderance of *satva*. With the fullness of the heart, not only their mouth speak, their hands also work, their love for humanity, especially the suffering section of it, knows no bounds. They help thousands of people both physically and spiritually and they in their turn take up the burden of the suffering humanity on soldiers. Romain Rolland speaking about Sri Ramakrishna's sympathy draws out the point very clearly :

> 'If he did not try to detach himself from life, as so many mystics do, to avoid sufferings, it was because of universal love, which was to him a second sight, revealed to him, in a flash, in the presence of human misery, that 'Jiva is Siva' —that the living being is God—that whoever loves God must unite himself with him in sufferings, in misery, even in errors

and excesses, in the terrible aspect of human nature.'

BASIS OF THE HARMONIZING PHILOSOPHY

This universal love and sympathy was evident in all great souls whose only absorption was God. This was true of Christ, of Ramanuja, of Chaitanya and of a galaxy of sains and seers of the world. Realized souls see the world from the standpoint of realization and tell us that the world is nothing but Brahman, the substratum of all existence. For ordinary men, ethical principles are formulated on the basis of these truths, as Swami Vivekananda has done in formulating his 'Practical Vedanta' :

> 'This is the gist of all worship—to be pure and to do good to others. He who see Siva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Siva; and if he sees Siva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary He who has served and helped one poor man seeing Siva in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him Siva is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples.'

This application is necessary. To have the best ideal of service to the world, our philosophy of service must be grounded in the transcendental Reality to give it a permanent value. Our pursuit in ordinary life would not be based upon the ephemeral values alone, it must lead us gradually to the highest truth.

Let us see what happens when we take up questions like 'social service', or 'social justice' simply as a mundane affair, denying them a higher morality. Wilfred Cantwell Smith opines in his *Islam in Modern History* that in practice as well as in theory, they who start by denying transcendence end up by denying value. The Marxist doctrine had started as a humanist movement. But we find today that social justice, which the Marxist had first set out to achieve, has become in the hands of the Communist parties an ideological weapon to serve the purposes of a nihilistic mundane power. The Marxist movement had repudiated transcendental norms by which it could be judged, and has, therefore, eventuated rather quickly in an enterprise with no norms at all.

A Philosophy

Based on this higher realization, a philosophy has been formulated in the dictum '*Atmano moksartham jagaddhitaya ca*— for one's own salvation and for the good of the world.' This twin ideal gives the best practical ideal for most of us who do not believe in the mere reforms bereft of higher ideals or unrelated to our own supreme good and yet are not spiritually developed enough to devote exclusively to the religious pursuit. Swami Vivekananda showed very clearly in his *Karma Yoga* that it is not mere work that purifies our minds but the spirit behind it. In the words of Shakespeare, "There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.' The mere act of making a garland is not spiritual but the motive that it is for the sake of the Lord, that makes it so. Similarly, mere giving medicine or education to the suffering or ignorant is not spiritual but the accompanying thought that God is in man, makes the whole work a worship. This kind of attitude towards work purifies the mind. It is from this subjective standpoint of purifying one's own mind that all social service gets its spiritual value. Purification of the mind in the ultimate analysis, is the objective of all spiritual disciplines. In the purified mind dawns knowledge or love of God.

Distinguished from Philanthropy

This view should not be identified with philanthropic ideals of humanism or charity. It is not humanism. For, in humanism, man is the centre and society the circumference, whereas this view has its centre in man-God and its field of work is the whole of humanity. In the latter, therefore, service cannot degenerate into charity A man becomes charitable either to get rid of the beggar or to get name and fame or if it is a purer motive out of sympathy. Even sympathy is not enough. The ideal of service of man as God brushes off the concealed feeling of condescension. It is inspired by reverence and humanity. As Swami Vivekananda said : 'Let the giver kneel down and give thanks, let the receiver stand up and permit.' A worshipper can only serve and adore, not pity and help. He is not puffed up with success, he is not mortified with failure, for he considers himself an instrument of God. No service is small to him, for all work is God's service and he takes as much care of the means as of the ends. This spirit saves religious movements from being choked by social

programmes and it elevates social movements into spiritual Sadhana thus saving them from frustration. Sri Ramakrishna, or for the matter of that all men of God, denounced the philanthropy of the self-lauding type, which was not service as spiritual discipline. In a way, it may be considered a new outlook and a new way of salvation. But in reality, its basis is the ancient scriptures, particularly the Vedanta.

Vedantic Scheme

The Vedantic view proclaimed the spiritual unity of the world and men with God. When Sri Sankara gave the gist of the whole Vedanta in a single time, 'Brahman alone is real, the world is unreal and the jiva is nothing but Brahman, he stressed also the idea that embodied souls are one with Brahman. For ages we have laid stress upon the unreality of the world But it remained for Swami Vivekananda to draw our attention to the other part of the saying, the oneness of man and God. In Vedanta, the world is conceived as the body of *Virata*, the highest manifestation of God. And service to living beings must be done with a worshipful attitude towards them. The reverential outlook towards social duty is further included by the idea of *Svadharma*. Its purpose is two-fold : individual purification and duty to others. The hard school of duty will teach man self-control and one-pointedness which along with self-dedication will make him free from all desires and then he will be free from all duties. *Sannyasa* dissolves all obligations but it is not the beginning of spiritual life, it is the end. If it precedes, it must be coupled with unselfish work In the presence of such an ideal man, the whole society is surcharged with the fragrance of love, holiness and unselfishness. Then welfare of society naturally follows. Tnat is the history of all great movements. Their realization inspires men with faith, hope and charity and when these virtues come is it difficult to have men dedicated to social service.

God-intoxicated Life Improves Society

From this consideration, the spiritual ideal, even if bereft of direct physical service, should be the guiding force for all social work. As Toynbee remarks in his *Civilization on Trial* that 'seeking God is itself a social act' for it makes not only the aspirants but all members better men free from egoism which is a

prime necessity for all altruistic activities. Sorokin in his *Reconstruction of Humanity* very pertinently observes : 'A society consisting of only thoroughly egoistic members could not survive and no Peaceful or creative society could be made up of wholly egoistic members.' He further says that impure altruism, based on pleasure or utility does not carry us far but genuine altruism is pure even in its motivation : altruistic actions are performed for their own sake, quite apart from any considerations of pleasure or utility. To produce altruistic type of humanity, society must be oriented that way. 'Altruistic individuals', says he, 'cannot be reared in a *milieu* of egoistic culture and social institutions.'

Higher Ideal of Service

So even for doing more service, the ideal must be grounded on higher principles. Toynbee, in the aforesaid book, very pertinently observe : "It is a paradoxical but profoundly true and important principle of life that the most likely way to reach a goal is to be aiming not at the goal itself but at some more ambitious goal beyond it.' So the social reformers, who consider the social betterment to the urgent need, would do well even for the sake of the greatest measure of the success in their immediate undertaking to get it connected with higher ideals. This will give an added motive force to their work and save the workers from frustration which is inevitable in all social undertakings. As we have said earlier, only the ideal of work for the sake of one's spiritual good can save them from that frustration. Even from the psychological standpoint this combination is good Dr. Jung divides men into two broad categories of introverts and extroverts, though normally a man's temperament in a mixture of the two. So this two-fold ideal will meet the needs of these temperaments also.

Sources of Enthusiasm

Since the reconstruction of society demands from all members of society their full attention to the production of material goods, the modern conception of good life is not to cultivate certain objective virtues but the creation of a good society assuring plenty and prosperity. To produce in plenty it is necessary to create enthusiasm in people. It may be done by encouraging self-interest. But there is a great danger in stressing too much this aspect of human nature. Egotism and selfishness are quite strong in an

unregenerate human being It is by training and culture that a man becomes sociable and fit to be a good member of society. If the main incentive of unselfish behaviour is withdrawn, no amount of self-interest enlightened or otherwise, can hold the people together for a long time. Hinduism tried to solve this problem by attuning human aspiration to the Divine. The four objects of attainment, viz. virtue, wealth, desire and emancipation (*Dharma Artha, Kama, Moksa*) are inter-related. Man is not denied the joys and material goods of life. He is to labour hard for wealth and fulfilment of desires. But it must be done with a due sense of propriety, discrimination and regard for the ultimate end. All these ideals must not be thrown into the winds This is *Dharma.* It steers man through wealth and desire to emancipation.

Ideal of Individual Perfection

It lays stress on individual perfection by shifting the emphasis to a non-material objective. And by doing so, it contributes a great deal in lessening unhealthy competition and thus paves the way for social cohesion and unity. This scheme of four-fold objectives of life harmonizes the urges for individual perfection and social salvation. To keep the incentive of social welfare intact, it is necessary to ground it on a firm basis. In the ultimate analysis, it will be found that a man is a true servant of society in proportion to the perfection of his character. As Tolstoi said : 'There is only one way of serving mankind, and that by becoming better yourself.' Moreover, a society is the summation of individuals. It is high time that our social gospellers gave up harping on the unhealthy separation between these two ideal. If so much of unselfishness and spirit of sacrifice is met with in modern society inspite of preaching the doctrines of selfishness, it is because of the moral standard attained by the efforts of our unselfish, idealistic and God-loving ancestors. The modern non-religious yet socially aware man is like a baby on a monument enjoying the panoramic view forgetting that his stature has increased because of the basis, the contemporary social ***milieu,*** which is a product of centuries of spiritual culture. Secularistic gospels will be considered audacious, if they claim to be a substitute for spiritual values. Their message is one-sided; they cannot visualize a meeting ground between religion and science; they cannot see that in pure minds, intuition and emotion need not

conflict with reason, that scientific knowledge demands the supreme effort of the heart as well

Let us look to the future and guide the nation towards a more abiding, more permanent welfare What our social workers need is the vitalizing influence of a burning faith in spirituality. There is not another such potent force to turn an ego-centric into a cosmocentric Reform by consent may not be as quick as reform by compulsion. But force, coercion and violence cannot work for social cohesion

CONCLUSION

With the progress of quick transport, the contact of different nationals has brought this conflict of ideals to the forefront The predominantly meditative and spiritual civilization of the East meets the aggressively active civilization of the West It is not possible to stay in one's own corner any more In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, 'A living philosophy must answer the problem of the day ' And it must satisfy both these urges represented by the two civilizations A synthetic culture is the demand of today. 'There has been scarcely any great culture without a great religion as the foundation', says Sorokin Here is a new religion or rather a new religion or rather a new interpretation of the old, which can satisfy the needs of the age and urge the members of society to engage themselves in social reform that is very urgent and which at the same time can lead them to that freedom which is the eternal hunger of the soul Let us then adopt this method of service and strive for the higher goal Swami Vivekananda will encourage us with his oft-quoted exhortation, 'Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached

32

VIVEKANANDA : THE WIT

S P. Sen Gupta

In his life as well as in talks, Swami Vivekananda never dropped the veil of playfulness He was never tired of telling people that we are children of bliss, and therefore, we should never look morose and sombre On the 9th December, 1900, the Swami returned to Belur Math from West unannounced The monks were then having their meals at night. The gardener came hurriedly and said, 'An Englishman has come' Speculations were rife as to his identity. To their great astonishment, they found the Englishman coming to them. 'How could he come?' they wondered, for the main gate was under lock and key Now they had no difficulty in recognizing. He was none other than Swami Vivekananda himself. 'Our Swamiji has come' was on everybody's lips. It was an occasion for rejoicing Swami Vivekananda, the eternal boy, jumped over the wall. And then laughing he said, 'I heard the bell inviting you all to your dinner. I thought I should not miss it And that is why I scaled the wall'

While at Mayavati, one day Swami Vivekananda was a little irritated, because the food could not be served to him in time. Swami Virajananda, the Swami's disciple was cooking. When the food was at last served, Swami Vivekananda said angrily, 'Take away the food. I won't have it.' Virajananda kept mum. Then minutes passed, and neither spoke a word. And Swami Vivekananda relented. He began to eat like a boy. 'Do you know?'

the Swami asked, 'Why I was so angry, I was frightfully hungry.'

It was snowing heavily. Swami Vivekananda's delicate health could not stand that climate. He must be removed to a warmer place. But how to get the porters ? 'What do you propose to do ?' the Swami asked 'We shall carry you,' replied Virajananda. 'Well, in that case,' Swami Vivekananda said playfully, 'You want to throw me in the ditch.'

Swami Vivekananda had been to Dacca. People of all shades of opinion visited him from time to time. A youngman brought a photograph of a religious man and asked, "Well, Swamiji, don't you believe that he is an incarnation of God ?' 'I don't know,' replied the Swami. And yet the youngman repeated the question with pertinacity. 'My dear boy,' the Swami said, 'I fear you are underfed. You should eat more. Your brain. I fear, has dried up.'

'Do you really love me ?' Swami Vivekananda asked, 'Yes, I love you' was the unequivocal reply from Swami Ramakrishnananda. Swami Vivekananda wanted to test him. Ramakrishnananda was a little orthodox. So Swami Vivekananda said, 'Then bring a loaf from the shop.' Ramakrishnananda was the son of a Brahmin, and Swami Vivekananda thought, he might hesitate to bring the loaf. For in those days loaf was socially tabooed among the orthodox. But Ramakrishnananda brought the loaf without the least hesitation.

Even after the conquest of the west, Swami Vivekananda could not assume pontifical solemnity. He never ceased to be playful with his brothers-in-faith. Sometimes he used to drag several persons into heated arguments and enjoy the situation. Swami Shivananda did not exaggerate when he said that wherever Swami Vivekananda chose to be, he would throw open the flood-gates of unalloyed joy. We have it on the authority of Swami Saradananda that Swami Vivekananda would often say, 'One who cannot make funs is incapable of intellectual feats.' Haripada Mittra became Swami Vivekananda's disciple when the latter had already leaped into fame. His impression was this that the Swami was 'a stout, young monk with a cheerful countenance.' That cheerful countenance remained unchanged for the rest of his life. He often quoted from Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*, one of the most humorous books in English literature, 'Swamiji,' recalls a

disciple, 'sometimes imparted very valuable lessons through humour or derision . . . . He would be merry, full of gaiety, fun and laughter, just like a boy, even when imparting the highest instruction. He laughed and made others laugh with him . . . . Some came to enjoy his humorous talks.'

In reply to the remark that monks and holy men cannot be stout, the Swami replied, 'This is my famine insurance fund! Even if I do not get food for days on end, my fat will keep me alive.'

Josephine MacLeod recalls how once Swami Vivekananda was travelling with his American disciples in a boat. There were some orthodox Hindus also. Miss MacLeod and others had taken with them some chickens, which were clucking. Swami Vivekananda who knew, they were hidden, had a twinkle in his eye, but he would never betray them On that occasion, the Hindu Pundits asked the Swami, 'Why do you have to do with these ladies ? They are *mlechchas.* They are untouchables.' This is but one side of the picture. The Westerners, on the other hand, would come to Miss MacLeod and others and say, 'Swamiji is not treating you with respect. He meets you without his turban.' Swami Vivekananda heard the allegations against him from either side, and yet could have great fun laughing at the idiosyncrasies of the civilizations of the East and the West.

Swami Vivekananda gave a call to his disciples to have the food, cooked by him. 'Now I am going to cook for you and serve the brithrin (*sic*). The food is delicious and for "yours truly" too hot with spices.' What is food for one is poison to another. What is 'delicious' to the Orientals may not be relished by the Westerners. Swami Vivekananda belonged to a family that was frightfully fond of hot dishes. Viswanath Dutta and his illustrious son were both excellent cooks. And hence when the Swami invited his Western disciples, they had mixed feelings. Swami Vivekananda's call is irresistible. But the preparation with chillies galore was not a happy prospect either. But take they must. Their tummies ached after they had taken the hot dishes. 'If Swamiji could cook for me', wrote one disciple, 'I can take the food and jolly well die for it.'

Swami Vivekanda was fond of icecream. Miss MacLeod recalls in her memoirs that the Swami was passionately fond of chocolate ice-cream, and would jestingly say that he himself was

like chocolate, and hence this fascination. 'How do you like strawberry ?' asked a Western disciple. 'I have never tasted it' was the Swami's reply. 'Goodness gracious !,' persisted the disciple. 'You are taking strawberry everyday with ice-cream.' 'Even if you keep a pebble,' replied the Swami, 'inside ice-cream, I shall take it without knowing what is inside.' Only four months before his passing away, Miss MacLeod gave Swami Vivekananda two hundred dollars and promised to pay him fifty dollars a month 'Are you sure,' the Swami asked, 'this will suffice for me ?' 'Yes,' replied Miss MacLeod, 'only you can't have ice-cream '

After a lecture, the disciples took Swami Vivekananda to a restaurant. It was an awfully cold night, and as Ida Ansell recalls, it was hellish cold. Yet the Swami chose cold ice-cream. The hostess asked the Swami to wait for her, as she had an engagement elsewhere. She said that she would come back quickly. 'Well,' said the Swami, 'Don't be long or when you come back you will find only lump of chocolate ice-cream.'

On another occasion, Swami Vivekananda was in a restaurant. He asked for chocolate ice-cream, and the waitress mistakenly brought ice-cream soda—a thing the Swami did not relish. The manager was annoyed and scolded the waitress At this, the Swami called out, 'Don't you scold that poor girl. I'll take all the ice-cream soda if you are going to scold her.'

Mrs. Steele prepared a good dinner for Swami Vivekananda. The dessert consisted of fine dates After that the Swami went to deliver a lecture, which was highly appreciated by all. Swami Vivekananda accounted for his success and told Mrs Steele, 'It was your dates, madam.' Amidst all the serious discussions of philosophy, Swami Vivekananda could be playful. Ida Ansell writes : 'The jokes continued to be interspersed among the serious subjects !'

Swami Vivekananda was neither a gourmand nor a gourmet. And yet he never liked to tighten the belt. That explains why he was never tired of jokes, related to food. Once in the course of a lecture, he said that he had read Dante's *Inferno* there times. The hell described by Dante, did not appear horrible to him. The Hindu conception of hell was far more horrible. And then the Swami presented a lurid picture of the hell. A glutton was taken to hell. All the delicacies were served before him. He naturally

felt tempted to have them all. But ulas ! his tummy was several thousand miles long, while the mouth was as small as the point of a needle A greater punishment than tantalization can hardly be imagined

Shanti, a disciple, served Swami Vivekananda. One morning he found her cooking when she was supposed to have been in the morning class 'Are you not coming to meditate ?' asked the Swami, 'Yes,' she replied, 'but I have to get the broth simmering first. Then I shall come in ' The Swami replied playfully, but with a solemn face 'Well, never mind. Our Master said, you could leave meditation for service.'

A boy once watched Swami Vivekananda taking coffee. He said, 'Black man like (*sic*) coffee; white man like coffee, red man like coffee ' Swami Vivekananda was amused and offered some coffee to the boy. Throughout the afternoon, the Swami, even when left to himself, kept repeating the boy's remark and laughing.

While Swami Vivekananda was at Alameda. Edith would cook for him Once some pickles were brought for him. He took some of them, and the juice of the fruits ran out on his hand. Without any ado he put his fingers to his mouth to lick the juice off. Edith was shocked at this. Swami Vivekananda said, 'This little outside. That's the trouble with you; you always want the outside to be so nice.'

In an article, Christopher Isherwood quotes an interesting story, narrated by Swami Vivekananda about Madame Sarah Bernhardt, the famous French actress. We are reproducing it without any alteration. 'Madame Bernhardt has a special regard for India; she tells me again and again that our country is *tres ancien, tres civilise*—very ancient and very civilized. She had told me that for about a month . . she had visited every museum and made herself acquainted with the men and women, and their dress, the streets and bathing ghats and everything relating to India. Madame Bernhardt has a very strong desire to visit India.—"*C'est mon rave* !—It is the dream of my life," she says. The prince of Wales has promised to take her over to a tiger and elephant hunting excursion. But then she said, she must spend some two lacs of rupees if she went to India ! "*La Divine Sarah*"—the divine Sarah—is her name—how can she want money !—She who never travels but by a special train ! That pomp and luxury many a

prince of Europe cannot afford to indulge in. One can only secure a seat in her performance by paying double the fees, and that a month in advance ! Well, she is not going to suffer want of money ! But Sarah Bernhardt is given to spending lavishly. Her travel to India is therefore put off for the present.'

In this account, Swami Vivekananda is playful and ironical at the same time. Again, when he said, 'When the American girls fail to procure husbands, they become old maids and naturally get attached to the church,' he is distinctly ironical. But that is not his usual role. 'He had,' writes E.T. Sturdy, 'a great sense of humour and as a natural correlative, much pathos and pity for affiction.' That is the correct appraisal of Swami Vivekananda's humour. Sister Christine recalls an anecdote, which may also be quoted.

'Swamiji', some body said, 'You said just the opposite yesterday.' 'Yes.' replied Swami Vivekananda, 'that was *yesterday*.'

Cornelia Conger recalled how Swami Vivekananda told her grandmother Mrs Lyon, 'Look here, Mrs. Lyon, I had the greatest temptation of my life in America.' Mrs. Lyon felt amused and asked, 'Who is she ?' 'Not a lady,' replied Swami Vivekananda, 'it is the organization in America.'

Sister Christine, about whom we said before, recalls that it was not all Vedanta and deep serious thought that engaged the Swami. Sometimes after the classes, it was pure fun and such gaiety as were never seen before. For all the disciples thought that religious men were grave. But Swami Vivekananda gave the lie to the popular belief, because he was in a state of child-like joy, which is a sign of detachment that comes only to those who have seen the great Reality. Sister Christine also narrates how on one occasion a woman asked, "Swamiji, are you a Buddhist (pronounced like *bud*) 'No, madam,' came the reply, 'I am a florist '

Swami Vivekananda did not very much like the congregational singing in the church, which he humorously described as 'bottle-breaking business.' He also made all sorts of fun of 'Beulah Land' and sang :

I have reached the land of corn and wine,
And all its riches freely mine.

India was Swami Vivekananda's subject for discourse. He asked Tom before his lecture, 'Look here, I never know when to stop when I speak on India Please, therefore, draw my attention at 10 O'clock ' At 10 O'clock, Tom swung his watch like a pendulum just to give Swamiji the hint that it was 10 O'clock. The Swami reacted, 'He is swinging the watch, for it must be 10 O'clock, but I have not yet started ' The episode is undoubtedly amusing but is it not at the same time an eloquent testimony to Swami Vivekananda's burning patriotism ?

'Why do you,' demanded Reeves Calkins, 'teach religion in *my* country ?' 'Why do you teach religion in *my* country ?' Swami Vivekananda asked. Both looked at each other presumably not as friends. The Swami smiled and laughter is infectious. Both of them were off their guards, and both burst out laughing and became friends

Swami Vivekananda and Swami Shivananda were seated in a room at Benaras. They had an exchange of repartees. Both laughed. 'Well Mahapurush' (that was the name given by Swami Vivekananda to Swami Shivananda) said the Swami, 'so you think that I am Sukracarya, the spiritual guide of the demons ?' A delicate nerve of one of the eyes of Swami Vivekananda was damaged, and therefore he was slightly visually handicapped. That is why he compared himself with Sukracarya, who was one-eyed. The second point of comparison was that Sukracarya, though not a demon, was the preceptor of the demons. Swami Vivekananda similarly was the preceptor of the Westerners without being a Westerner himself.

Swami Premananda could not get up in time and attend the prayer. Swami Vivekananda sent a messenger to ring the bells near his ears. Swami Brahmananda also was once a defaulter. Sarat Chakrabarty (a disciple of Swami Vivekananda) was ordered by the Swami to ring the bells near his ears. Swami Vivekananda wanted all to be punctual and regular, and even then the playful boy was irrepressible.

'Educate the masses,' was Swami Vivekananda's motto. And that motto was also explained in a witty manner. He asked his disciples not to 'associate themselves with Prahlad.' When asked to explain it the Swami said, 'You know Prahlad burst into tears when he read *ka* (the first letter of the Bengali alphabet) for that reminded him of Krsna. And, therefore, those who were opposed

to education might be called the followers of Prahlad.'

Navagopal Ghosh, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna had a shrine for the Master. He made elaborate arrangements for the purpose. Swami Vivekananda and others came there in time. Mrs. Navagopal Ghosh said, 'Swamiji, we have not the means to worship the Master.' 'Our Master,' replied the Swami, 'never lived in a house made of marble, and here he is enshrined in a marble house. He was born in a thatched cottage in the village. If he refuses to live here amidst such comforts, where else can he live ?' All people laughed at this.

Swami Vivekananda had been to the Zoological garden at Calcutta with Sister Nivedita and Sarat Chandra Chakrabarty. The Superintendent showed them a large snake, which, he said, became the tortoise in the process of evolution. The East Bengal people are fond of tortoises. The Swami, therefore, said to Sarat Chandra, "You take tortoises, that means you take snakes also.' The Swami explained it in English, and Sister Nivedita along with others had a hearty laugh.

Untouchability and casteism never found favour with Swami Vivekananda, who looked upon everybody as Siva That is why he was never tired of condemning this social stigma, but in his condemnation also, he was refreshingly playful. At the Zoological garden, the Superintendent had made arrangements for snacks and tea. They were at the same table. Sarat Chandra Shrank a little while he had to take the tea and sweets, touched by Nivedita. Reluctantly he had to take these things. He, however, decided not to take water. The Swami took some water and gave it to him. Now disarmed, he had to take water also. Sarat Chandra did not know what was in store for him. The Swami returned to Belur Math, and in the presence of a number of people, announced the news : 'You will be surprized to know that this orthodox Brahmin has taken the leavings of Nivedita.' And then turning to Sarat Chandra, he asked, 'You have taken the sweets, that's all right. But why did you take the water ?' 'You are my *Guru*', said Sarat Chandra, 'I can take anything at your command.' 'But henceforth,' Swami Vivekananda replied, 'no body will recognize you as a Brahmin.'

Sarat Chandra brought a large fish to Belur Math. The Swami prepared a few courses in the English style with vermicelli. Actually, vermicelli is a paste of some materials as macaroni; made

in slender threads. Not familiar with that stuff, Sarat Chandra asked him what it was. 'They are', the Swami replied, 'English earthworms. I have dried and brought them here.' Everybody laughed at poor Sarat Chandra's discomposure.

Once a youngman had been coming to Swami Vivekananda rather frequently. The Swami knew that his university examination was not far off, and he was coming to the Swami with a view to becoming a monk so that he might ward off the bogey of examination. The Swami told the youngman to pass his M.A. examination and then be a monk. For to be a monk was far more difficult than to pass the M A examination.

On a July evening, it was raining heavily. Swami Vivekananda asked everybody to walk barefooted. Dharma Pala insisted on walking with shoes on. 'Never mind, I will wade with my shoes on,' he said. Some of them slipped, and the Swami burst into laughter like a child.

'What is in a name ?' said Shakespeare. But there is much in name, as far as Swami Vivekananda is concerned. Swami Vivekananda christened more people than anybody we know of. The names are an unmistakable proof of Swami Vivekananda's sense of humour, not unmixed with love and affection. Let us star with his brothers-in-faith. Latu (Swami Adbhutananda) was originally known as Rakhturam, which in the process of evolution became Latu or Leto. Sri Ramakrishna usually called him Leto. Swami Vivekananda made Leto Plato. There is a history behind the name, and it is not a bad idea to know it. "Have you ever heard of the worship of the earth ?,' asked Latu. Swami Vivekananda wondered. 'Look here, Naren', said Latu, 'the earth is the grand repository of all our resources. And hence my question, do all people worship the earth ?' Swami Saradananda was seated by Swami Vivekananda. 'Look here, Sarat,' Swami Vivekananda said, 'Lato is talking like Plato, the philosopher. And hence the name Plato caught on. Hariprasanna, known in the Order as Swami Vijnanananda was named by the Swami as the Bishop of Allahabad, and occasionally as 'Peshan.' Swami Trigunatitananda's name, however could not be changed. In one of the letters, Swami Vivekananda wrote, 'Don't you think you should curtail your enormously long name ? Your name will scare away even the god of death. Now it is too late to change it.' Swami Shivananda came to be known as 'Mahapurush,' for

once he said, through the grace of the Master he had completely conquered lust—an almost impossible feat. The famous author of *Sri Ramakrishna Punthi* was Sri Akshay Kumar Sen, and Swami Vivekananda improvised a peculiar name for him—'Sankhcunni,' i e , the ghost with a nasal tone. Girish Chandra Ghosh became G.C as Bernard Shaw became G.B.S. Jajneswar Bhattacharyya, the son of the family-priest of Swami Premananda had a little beard. He looked like an East Bengal Muslim. Moreover, his nickname was Fakir And hence quite logically Swami Vivekananda called him 'Fakiruddin Haider.'

Swami Vivekananda was not stand-offish in relation to his own disciples. Margaret Noble, known as Nivedita today, became Margot. Josephine MacLeod had several names—Joe, Joe Joe, Jaya and Yum Mrs. Ole Bull was known as 'Dhira Mata.' Mr. and Mrs. George Hale were named 'Father Pope' and 'Mother Church' respectively. Francis Leggett became 'Frankincence ' Mrs. Eddy, the founder of the Christian Scientific Association was called Mrs. Whirlpool since Eddy and Whirlpool are synonymous Singaravelu Mudaliar was called 'Kiddy,' because in Tamil Kiddy' means a parrot. Alasinga who selflessly furthered the cause of the Swami, had two names—the Haramohan of Madras and 'Achinga,' Alasinga's younger brother was, therefore, called 'chichinga' (snake-gourd). Swami Vivekananda established two journals, *Prabuddha Bharata* and *Udbodhan*. The first became 'Awakened,' which is but a literal translation of '*Prabuddha*, but '*Udbodhan*' (Awakening) became 'Udbandhan' (hanging) We are quite sure, the Swami must have improvised other names also, but we have not been able to discover them.

So long we had been dwelling at length on Vivekananda, the wit as revealed in his life and activities Swami Vivekananda's writings are also full of witticisms, despite their philosophic contents We shall select a few passages to show his wit.

'You always want to economize,' wrote Swami Vivekananda to Balaram Bose, 'how can Lord help you ? Lord wou'd bring money from his father's residence.' To Mary Hale, the Swami wrote about the cupidity of a presbyterian Priest. A ship was about to sink, and the priest, asked all the passengers to pray, and what did he do ? He began to collect piaculative pence from all of them. In a letter to Swami Trigunatitananda, Swami Vivekananda wrote : 'Notovitch writes that Jesus came to India . . . .

The picture of Jesus and the Samaritan woman was in a monastery. But how do you know it to be "Jesu" and not "Ghishu ?"' In a letter (written from Darjeeling) to Mary Hale, the Swami writes : 'I am very well here, for life in the plains has become a torture. I cannot put the tip of my nose out into the streets, but there is a curious crowd ! ! Fame is not all milk and honey ! ! I am going to train a big beard, now it is turning grey. It gives a venerable appearance and saves one from American scandal-mongers ! O thou white hair, how much thou canst conceal, all glory unto thee, Hallelujah !' Again in a letter to Ramakrishnananda, he writes, 'You have recommended a man, saddled with a family. He threatens that if help is not extended, he would embrace Christianity. If so, Hindu India would lose the brightest jewel . . . Hari, Sarada and myself are dancing waltz. You would wonder how we could maintain balance.'

In a letter to Ramakrishnananda, Swami Vivekananda wrote : 'I am glad to know that instead of pursuing your favourite poses of worship and *Kling Fot* [Tantrik practices], you have dedicated yourself to the cause of emancipating the people of Madras.' Then he continued, 'You have recommended a youngman, who has no means of livelihood. It is the same old story, but what is new about it is the Madrasi version, "I have a large number of children" . . . You will faint away to learn that the business of worship has been considerably reduced.'

While describing the miserable plight of the English in Africa, Swami Vivekananda wrote : 'A soldier on duty cried out that he had caught a Tartar. Bring him in', was the command from inside. "He refuses to come", said the soldier. The command became sterner. "Then you come yourself". "The Tartar does not allow me to come either", was the meek reply.'

Bhabbar Katha is a collection of humorous stories in a satirical vein. They are written in an inimitable style and have untranslatable delicacies. Yet they may be summarized. A man once went to a temple to have a *darsan* of the deity. Emotionally worked up, he thought he should sing a song. The priest had taken an intoxicant. As soon as the deafening song excoriated his ears, he was alerted. 'Why are you shouting in a stentorian voice ?' asked the priest. 'I am trying to propitiate the deity' was the reply. 'Do you think, asked the priest, that the deity is a fool ? You have not pleased *me* even. Is the deity even a greater fool than I ?'

There are some who parade their love of God, but the heart is dry within Bhola Chand is a man of this type. There is hardly any sin or crime he has not committed. Once he heard from somebody that God had assured Arjuna that if he could completely surrender himself to Him, He would deliver him. Bhola Chand resorted to all sorts of crimes with renewed vigour and energy. But at the same time he cried at the top of his voice, 'I have surrendered myself to God. I have, therefore, nothing to worry about.' Bhola Chand thought that he could throw dust in God's eyes. Is God such a fool ?

Swami Vivekananda could be at times extremely satirical. There are men who are seen to preach the teachings of the Vedanta Philosophy, without, however, practising them. Bholapuri claims to be a Vedantist. When people die of hunger or disease, he remains completely indifferent. 'None can die', he would say pontifically, 'the body may perish, but the soul is immortal.' He refuses to do any work. When questioned, he says that everything was done in his former birth. He loses his serenity only when he does not get enough alms from the householders. He is unbalanced when he is not duly recognized. He, then, feels that such people are undesirable, and the world should be rid of them. Bholapuri also thinks that God can be imposed upon.

Ram Charan also looks upon God as a fool. Ram Charan was asked, 'Well Ram Charan, you have not learned anything : you cannot do anything, you are not capable of any physical strain; you are a drug-addict, and moreover you are a habitual delinquent How, then, do you earn your living ? 'That is easy', replied Ram Charan glibly, 'I instruct people'.

At Lucknow, Mohurrum was being celebrated with great eclat. The Hindus and the Muslims and people of all communities crowded there. Two unsophisticated Rajput landlords were also present on the occasion. Mohurrum commemorated the tragic death of two holy men—Hassan and Hossain at the hands of Ezid, who is a symbol of sin. The devout Muslims even today beat their breasts and cry as they recollect the tragedy. The Rajput landlords were about to enter the mosque. The porter said, 'Look here. gentlemen, here is the effigy of Ezid, who killed Hassan and Hossain. You must beat the effigy with shoes for five times, and then alone can you get in'. But strange were the ways of the unsophisticated Rajputs. They fell prostrate at the feet of the effigy

and said with devotion, 'Glory unto thee, O Ezid, Thou hast beaten them so severely that they are crying even now.' Most people, according to Swami Vivekananda, do not appreciate the spirit of religion and think just the other way round.

Swami Vivekananda had come to fulfil, and not to destroy. Nobody could be a greater Hindu than the Swami, and yet he detested the time-worm conventions. There is a temple of the Hindus that kisses the sky. All the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon are enshrined there. Nobody is getting inside the temple, at the gate of which there is a hydra-headed figure, having one hundred hands, two hundred tummies and five hundred legs. 'Who is he ?' asked the Swami. 'That is social convention', was the reply. 'You may at times listen to the Vedas. Vedanta and philosophy, but you must unhesitatingly carry out the commands of the god known as social convention.'

Superstition and social convention are deeply rooted in us. Gurgure Krishnabyal Bhattacharyya claims to be omniscient. He is lanky, and his friends say complacently that it is due to deep meditation. The enemies say, it is due to starvation or his having begot thirty children in a year. He can scientifically interpret everything. He will explain why people have pigtails; why the soil of the courtyard of the public woman is necessary for *Durga Puja* and why it is desirable to make a girl of ten conceive. With pontifical solemnity he claims that India is the only religious land, and the Brahmins are the only favoured few who can appreciate religion Of the Brahmins, the members of the Krishnabyal family are the most religious, and of them Gurgure is decidedly the holiest If somebody wants to question the conventions, Gurgure would assuringly say, 'sleep to your heart's content. I shall vicariously do everything for you. Don't, however, forget to pay me handsomely.' And then everybody slept again Swami Vivekananda sought to awaken the sleeping leviathan. In all the stories in *Bhabbar Katha*, Swami Vivekananda is a satirist, who tries to awaken the masses and free them from the bondage of social conventions and sentimentalism. He is at times angry and even cruel, but he is cruel only to be kind. The playful note, however, is never absent.

Parivrajak is a *magnum opus* not so much for the philosophy as for the in-exhaustible fund of humour. We shall select a few passages to illustrate our point. Swami Vivekananda's companion

on board the ship was Swami Turiyananda, who got frightened to see the knives and forks at the hands of the white passengers at the dining table. Swami Turiyananda, Swami Vivekananda hinted, had a tender body. Swami Vivekananda wondered if Hanuman who crossed the Indian Ocean ever had any sea-sickness. The very absurdity of the conception adds a humorous touch. Swami Vivekananda's pen-portait of a typical Bengali poet, Shyama-charan excites our laughter. Shyamacharan has travelled as far as Burdwan, and at Calcutta he lives in a room on the groundfloor, which is so well-lighted and ventilated that he has burnt a candle even at noon. The walls are beautifully bespattered with the red pigment of *pan*, and the music of the lizards, mice and moles can be heard all the while. Amidst such congenial surroundings, Shyamacharan, comfortably seated on a cot and tugging at his hubble-bubble, writes magnificent poetry about the Himalayas, sea and ocean and the arid desert.

Swami Vivekananda carried some water of the Ganga in a vessel, which looked like a *Badna* [a vessel normally used by the Muslims]. At night the Swami was startled to find that Mother Ganga had refused to be in *Badna*. If the Mother would repeat her old game of piercing through the Himalayas, casting adrift *Airavat* the divine Elephant, and demolishing Jahnu Muni's hermitage, it would not be a pleasant experience. The Swami prayed to the Mother, 'Well, mum, don't be so impatient. We shall reach Madras tomorrow, and there you can do as you like At Madras the people are more intelligent than even the elephants and their tonsured heads with pigtails are almost made of stones. As a matter of fact, even the Himalayas are as soft as butter when compared to their heads.' [The readers are to remember that Swami Vivekananda casts no fling at any people He was too loving to do that. He just makes fun.] Swami Vivekananda's prayer was unheeded. He, therefore, hit upon a plan and said, 'O mum, the people who are approaching are the beef-eating Muslims; and the sweepers who are cleaning the cabins are the untouchables. If you still persist in coming out, I shall let them touch you. If you are still adamant. I shall send you straightway to your father's house, and you will remain there petrified.' And the Mother came to her senses.

The ship was rolling, and Swami Turiyananda had sea-sickness. He gave the gorge, and Swami Vivekananda commented ;

'Turiyananda is trying to discover the rice which he had taken in childhood on the occasion of his *annaprasan*.' Swami Turiyananda requested Swami Vivekananda to complete his article on *Vartaman Bharat* [India today]. Playfully he asked Turiyananda, 'Well, brother, what is the condition of India today ?' Still suffering from sea-sickness, Turiyananda replied, 'Extremely miserable, getting very much muddled up !'

As they had entered into the sea, Turiyananda suggested that for the safety of the voyage they should promise to offer a goat to the Mother Ganga. Swami Vivekananda who never failed to tease, readily agreed. Next day Turiyananda asked Swami Vivekananda about it. The Swami showed him the meat of the goat at the dining table. 'But you are eating that', wondered Turiyananda. Swami Vivekananda then told him a story. To a certain place, where Ganga was not flowing nearby, a son-in-law, living in Calcutta came. The drums were being beaten. The mother-in-law insisted, 'My child, you must take this milk.' The son-in-law thought that that was the social practice there. He took the milk, and the drums were beaten again 'My child', said the mother-in-law, with tears of joy, 'You have behaved like my son. You belong to Calcutta, and, therefore, you have the water of the Ganga in your stomach. I put the powder of your father-in-law's bones in the milk. You have taken it and therefore, your father-in-law has now secured his desired shelter in Ganga.' The conclusion of the story was equally smashing. 'Look here', Swami Vivekananda said, 'I belong to Calcutta. All the goats I am eating are in touch with the holy Ganga.'

Swami Vivekananda remarked on the boats of East Bengal. 'They are so durable that as soon as the wind blows, the passengers are asked to remember their gods.' While paying his compliments to the English, Swami Vivekananda is distinctly ironical. 'In our country we make a distinction between the gentlemen and the outcasts. But to our benign government, all are "natives". There is no distinction between a porter and a prince. Long live the British Government '

Every nation, Swami Vivekananda said, claimed to be Aryans. Some are hundred per cent Aryans, some slightly less. Some Indians thought that if they but denounced their national religion and clothes, the British Government would love and laud them to the skies. But just the reverse happened. They are being picked

and whipped and bullied.

Swami Vivekananda entered into a barber's shop. The bread was sickeningly long. 'Your looks offend me', said the barber. 'Perhaps the barber did not like Swami Vivekananda's saffron robes and turban. The Swami, therefore, decided to buy western clothes, which, he thought, would be the surest possport to the barber. An American gentleman put him along the right track, 'If you wear saffron robes that's all right. But once you wear western clothes, they will chase you.' Why all this ? because the Americans thought they were Aryans. Swami Vivekananda gave the lie to this belief by narrating a story. A *Dom* [a man of the lowest caste of the Hindu community] once said, 'We are of the highest caste. We are '*domamams.*'

Ceylon is the land of the Buddhists. Non-violence is their accepted creed. On the temples there, one can see the pictures symbolizing the punishment of those, who have resorted to violence. A thief once got into the house of a non-violent Ceylonese. The sons beat him severely. The father out of sheer compassion said, 'Don't forget that non-violence is our motto. You just put the thief in a sack, tie it, and throw him into the water.' The thief, overwhelmed with gratitude, exclaimed, 'How kind you are !'

We shall conclude our account by narrating Swami Vivekananda's description of the shark-hunt. It is not the description that matters. It is, in fact, the inimitable style of the Swami, which, I fear, even the best translators will fail to reconstruct. This applies to all that Swami Vivekananda has written. Our scholars in Bengali language and literature have devoted all their energy to the study of writers, whose writings have today become bibliographical treasures, fit for the museum; but Swami Vivekananda, who is a maker of Bengali prose still remains unexplored.

The shark was coming. The pilot fish preceded him. The pilot fish directs the shark to spot out the game. In return it gets a little leavings. But from the largeness of the shark's mouth it appears that in most cases the pilot fish is disappointed.

An angling rod was found out. The rod was much larger than one with which the bucket in a well is salvaged . . . Everybody was on the tenterhooks to have a look at the shark . . . The shark was baited, and forty to fifty persons began to pull it hard. It was done at an inopportune moment, and the shark escaped. Another

shark appeared on the scene Had the sharks any language, the escaping shark would have invariably told his fellow : 'Look here, be on your guard, the animal [the chunk of meat and the hook] is tasteful no doubt, but its bones are frightfully hard' . The other shark would have also suggested some medicine, like the biles of fish, the spleen of the haunch-backed pomfret, the broth of oisters and various other specifics of the sea Perhaps the shark was in touch with men and developed human propensities, and that explains his silence He simply smiled and said, 'I hope, you are all right ' He did not like to be deceived alone The shark came preceded by the pilot fish in much the same way as Ganga was preceded by Bhagirath . . The bait was made of English bacon, which looked like Sri Krsn, surrounded by the Gopis

Swami Vivekananda brought a new message to the suffering humanity—the message of joy and happiness On his life, character and works is writ large one word 'Joy'.

33

THE MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

KARAN SINGH*

Swamiji and friends,

Why is it that India survives through the centuries while many other great civilizations have perished and passed away into the dust? As you know, there were great civilizations in the past, there was Babylon and Mesopotamia and Greece and Egypt, and yet those civilizations have vanished from the face of this earth and live only in the four walls of museums or in the minds of research scholars But India retained the living and vital link with the sources of its civilization, with the very dawn of its history. It seems to me that the reason for this is that in this country there have been born from time to time great men and women who have kept the spark alive From time to time, when everything appeared dark and lost, and when it seemed that India would finally succumb to her enemies, there have arisen people here who have brought us a new light and a new hope and a new faith

This I think is visible throughout the history of India, and one such period had come upon us in the middle of the nineteenth century In 1857, the Indian Mutiny, or as we now prefer to call

*Formerly, *Sadar-ai-Riyasat*, Jammu & Kashmir

[Text of the speech delivered by Dr Karan Singh, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, Government of India at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi on 11th February, 1968 Ed]

it the First War of Indian Independence, had been defeated by the British, and India lay crushed and prostrate at the feet of her conqueror. It was not only a physical defeat, a military defeat—but it appeared almost as if the spirit of India was broken and that finally we were about to go under. At that time when everything around us was dark, there arose a new light in this country, a new power, a new vision. The Indian renaissance began, and within ninety years swept to a triumphant conclusion.

It is indeed a fascinating chapter in the long and varied history of India to study this marvellous renaissance that took place, the efflorescence in every field of human activity, in every field of human study. But perhaps the most remarkable part of this renaissance was the revival of the Spirit that revolved around two great personalities—Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. It was Sri Ramakrishna, who gave a new vision to India, and who became a beacon light of spirituality, attracting people from four corners of the country, and particularly the intelligentsia of Bengal, to his feet. And it was Swami Vivekananda who carried the message of the Master throughout the length and breadth of this country and to foreign land. It is a moving story how Narendra Nath Dutta met Sri Ramakrishna; his boyhood; his meeting with the Master; his discipleship; then his period as a wandering monk; then his visit abroad; his triumph in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and then his return to India and his triumphant march from Kashmir to Kanyakumari spreading the gospel of the Master. What Swami Vivekananda did was nothing less than completely to reinterpret Hinduism for his time and for his generation.

As I have said it is this constant reinterpretation of eternal truths, it is the constant restatement of eternal verities, that is the key to the progression and the evolution of India, and Swami Vivekananda did this. He gave a new interpretation to Hinduism, and indeed it was not only Hinduism that he preached but it was in fact a universal religion. And it is relevant for us today, because today again India finds itself in a difficult period. We are in a period of transition and turmoil and change. The old is dying, the new is yet to be born, and we find ourselves precariously poised in the midst of a changing world. At a time like this, we must turn again to Swami Vivekananda for his message of hope and power. I will try this evening to share with you some thoughts upon what

I feel are the four basic concepts of Swami Vivekananda, which are as relevant today as they were when he expounded them many decades ago.

The first concept is the essential unity of all religions. As you know, this is the fundamental tenet of our culture—the Rg-Vedic dictum '*Ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti*'—'The truth is one, the wise call it by many names'. Swami Vivekananda constantly reiterated this, and he based his teachings not merely upon theory but upon the actual religious and spiritual experiences of Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna in the course of his extraordinary *sadhana*, not only underwent the traditional Hindu disciplines, but also the Islamic, the Christian and other disciplines, and each one of them culminated finally in the same realization. As the *Mundaka Upanisad* puts it :

> '*Yatha nadyah syandamanah samudre astam gacchanti namarupe vihaya;*
> *Tatha vidvan namarupad vimuktah parataparam purusamupaiti divyam.*'

'As streams arise in many different parts of the country and yet find their way to the same ocean, or as to the same mountain peak there are many different paths, so do the various regions that have arisen in the world lead ultimately to the same goal.' And this essential unity of all regions was a very important aspect always stressed by Swami Vivekananda.

The second concept was that he moved beyond the divinity of God to the divinity of man The divinity of God is something which is being preached at all times and by every religion, but India has done more, it has preached the divinity of man. The Upanisads have a wonderful word for the human race—*amrtasya putrah* 'children of immortality.' It is the birth right of every individual who is born into this world to achieve that self-realization, and Swami Vivekananda reiterated that the mere quest for self-realization is not enough unless it is involved in the welfare of the people '*Atmano moksartham jagaddhitaya ca.*' Suffering humanity is around us everywhere, and Swami Vivekananda used to say that it is not enough to go away into the vastnesses of the Himalayas or into some cave and to meditate upon one's own being, but it is necessary to see the divinity in this

vast mass of suffering humanity that is around us. And therefore Swami Vivekananda preached something that is very important for Hinduism and for India, because very often we have had this divergence between the inner quest and outer involvement. Swami Vivekananda taught that there was no contradiction between the two, but that in fact the outer involvement could itself become the vehicle for the inner quest, and it is this message of Swami Vivekananda which the Ramakrishna Mission is so nobly propagating today.

Closely allied to the concept of the divinity of man is the concept of the dignity of each individual Swami Vivekananda thundered against the superstitions and absurdities that have gone in the name of religion in this country. He used all his eloquence and all his power to speak against what he called 'kitchen religion.' As you know, he used to say : 'Is your religion such a weak and poor and paltry thing that by touching somebody or by eating with somebody it will get destroyed ? If it is, then it should be destroyed, because any religion which is based upon such weak foundation cannot hope to survive and to live.' Similarly against untouchability and other such practices that have for centuries sullied the fair name of India, Swami Vivekananda spoke with eloquence and with power, and he was committed inalienably to this concept of the dignity of each individual.

Fourthly, Swami Vivekananda was imbued with a deep and glowing love for India. It is true that he travelled throughout the world, but for India he had a special love and a special reverence, and when he sat on the famous rock beyond Kanyakumari and looked up at the great nation that has given our race sustenance for so many thousands of years, he had a new vision and new dream of the India that he wanted to see, an India that would be resurgent, an India that would glow with power and energy, an India that would take to the whole world a message of spirituality. And here, very much like another great thinker Sri Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda felt that Indian freedom and Indian greatness had a message for the rest of the world. It was not merely for her own sake that India had to be great and free, but because she embodied in herself certain eternal truths and verities which had to be spread throughout this planet so that people could live in harmony with each other.

These two my mind were the main tenets of Swami

Vivekananda which he preached with such nobility and with such power Today again we need that type of a message What we really have to ask ourselves is, are we living up to the ideals and the vision that this great man held before us ? Twenty years after independence, our country is today again ridden with petty differences with wranglings over things that are not of fundamental importance Today again we seem to be losing sight of the great vision that our seers had placed before us Today again we seem to be entering a period of criticality We are today at the crossroads, not only we, but the whole of mankind Wars and conflict rage everywhere, and even as I am speaking to you today there are thousands of people writhing in the torment of war in another part of the world

Even in our own country the post-in-dependence generation to which I belong, the generation that came to maturity after independence, is groping for a new vision Old traditions are collapsing, old leaders are disappearing They no longer have the hold and the power over the minds of the younger generation Old taboos, old teachings no longer have the magnetic power that they once had And we find the youth of the nation today groping vainly for a new integration, for a new light, for a new vision It seems to me that this light and this vision has been provided to us for many many centuries The light is there in the Vedas, in the Upanisads and in the whole history of this country, and the light was again revealed to us by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda I would therefore in closing submit to this distinguished audience that when we gather to pay homage to this great man we should not do so in any sense of ritual or mere formality, but we should try to understand the inner power that motivated Swami Vivekananda, the glowing vision that he had before him We should try and look within and see whether we cannot even at this late hour rededicate ourselves to the principles for which Swami Vivekananda stood, and reintegrate our lives around the glowing philosophy that he preached for us and for all mankind

34

CYCLICAL THEORY OF HISTORY : SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S ASSESSMENT

BRAHMACHARI MUKTI CHAITANYA

There are many theories as to directions of History and its progress, linear, horizontal and trendlessly fluctuating progress Some again say it has no determined or fixed direction to forecast—it is of exploding type It breaks up without giving any information ahead as to its 'how' and 'when'. Nobody can read the whereabouts of this explosion of history or its direction or passage. It is a fact that there is sort of suddenness in the course of History. But amongst all these theses, cyclic theory is the most popular and old In the ancient Hindu tradition such terms as *kalpa* and *yuga-cakra* are very common The Chinese belief in the *yang* and *yin* gives some idea of the cycle In modern days, there are many who have given their opinion in favour of a cyclical progress of History. Dr Grace E Cairns, in a recent book *Philosophy of History*, writes about the cyclical theories that they were prevalent throughout the world in ancient days, for example, in Mesopotamia, in all the Buddhist countries, in Greece and amongst the Muslims.

Pointing out the significance and the popularity of this cyclical theory among the ancient people and their religion Dr Cairns further remarked . 'This kind of patterning began very early in the history of human thought with the mythopoeic Pars pro toto through methodological approach common among the ancient thinkers. The repetitions of the cycles of the material

cosmos signify the fleeting transience—the ultimate meaninglessness of the world. The individual must escape from the bondage of such a bubble world, ephemeral as the physical body which is its basis, into the spiritual world of the eternity.'

Swami Vivekananda also believed in the cyclical theory of history, and he said in this connexion : 'Another theory in modern times has been presented by several schools, that man's destiny is to go on always improving, always struggling towards but never reaching the goal. This statement, though apparently very nice, is also absurd, because there is no such thing as motion in a straight line Every motion is in a circle. A straight line, infinitely projected, must end in a circle. . Therefore, this idea that the destiny of man is progressing ever forward and forward, and never stopping, is absurd . . Because, just as in the case of electricity the modern theory is that the power leaves the dynamo and completes the circle back to the dynamo, so with hate and love : they must come back to the source.' (*The Complete Works*, Vol. I, pp. 195-96).

Love and hate are the two opposites that stir the History in its cyclic process by a sort of collusion between them. Swami Vivekananda said : 'This whole universe is a case of lost balance. All motion is the struggle of the disturbed universe to regain its equilibrium, which, as such, cannot be motion. Thus in regard to the internal world, it would be a state which is beyond thought, for thought itself is a motion. Now when all indication is towards perfect equilibrium by expansion and the whole universe is rushing towards it, we have no right to say that that state can never be attained. Again it is impossible that there should be any variety whatsoever in that state of equilibrium . . . Therefore this state of equilibrium is one of unity, of rest, and of homogeneity.' (*ibid*, Vol. VIII, p 156). And according to him, this process of homogeneity is a process of love. When History falls back from this ideal, war and hate overcome man. Empedocles, an early Greek thinker, can also be referred in this connexion He made a similar attempt to explain love and hate as the process running through all. In modern times, Sorokin also referred to a kind of power of love and hate in his study of History and society. He, too, contributed towards the cyclic theory. Spengler's bipartite division of History into woman's history and man's history describes the same idea.

Observing the static and the dynamic swing in the cyclic progress of History, Swami Vivekanand said : 'There come periods in the history of the human race when, as it were, whole nations are seized with a sort of world-weariness, when they find that all their plans are slipping between their fingers, that old institutions and systems are crumbling into dust, that their hopes are all blighted, and everything seems to be out of joint. Two attempts have been made in the world to found social life, the one was upon religion, and the other was upon social necessity. The one was founded upon spirituality, the other upon materialism . . . Curiously enough, it seems that at times the spiritual side prevails, and then the materialistic side—in wavelike motions following each other. In the same country there will be different tides. At one time the full flood of materialistic ideas prevails, and everything in this life—prosperity, the education which procures more pleasure, more food—will become glorious at first and then, that will degrade and degenerate. Along with the prosperity will rise to white heat all the inborn jealousies and hatreds of the human race.' (*ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 156-57). These two trends, namely, the cyclic rest and change, the spirituality and materiality with '*history as flow*' and '*history as made*', the twin ideas of Spengler.

The point is therefore that every action of history has got its opposite reaction. There is rise and fall. For Swami Vivekananda himself says that there is no progress without corresponding regression. 'In one society there is one set of evils, in another, another. So with the period of history. In the middle ages, there were more robbers, now more cheats. At one period there less idea of married life, at another prostitution. In one, more physical agony, in another a thousand more mental.'

Explaining further these waves of history that recur and repeat, Swami Vivekananda observed : 'Rest is followed by change—the universe. But that rest must have been preceded by other changes, and this change will be succeeded by other rests. It would be ridiculous to think that there was a period of rest and then came this change which will go on for ever. Every particle in nature shows that it is coming again and again to periodic rest and change.' (*ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 157). It is this conception of periodic rest and change that is similar to the concept of *yang* and *yin*—the *destructive* and the *constructive* forces of history, described in the Chinese mythology.

Swami Vivekananda's conception of hate and love and his analogy of dynamo and its power, already put forward above, can be studied with reference to the thoughts of Sorokin. Sorokin gave a philosophic treatment to this necessity of human love. But Swami Vivekananda sanctified it with divine interpretation. The steps of Sorokin are from unconscious to bio-conscious and then to socio-conscious and finally the supra-conscious level of saints. The supra-conscious level is the *sattvika* level about which Swami Vivekananda also spoke so much. In Sorokin's language: 'Altruistic love is the central value of the supra-conscious level. For it is only universal, perennial, and infinitely creative force that integrates that vast multitude into one unified system of construction. In Swami Vivekananda's teaching also, there is a strong emphasis on such altruistic-divine love. He, too, spoke of a spiritual fraternity between man and man. Instead of the term 'altruistic,' he mostly used the word 'selfless,—selfless love. Love is the only criterion in his philosophy of Humanism, and service to man is the one great call that he has given to his fellowmen. According to him, love is an important guiding factor of civilization. Love is not merely divine. It is also a human necessity, too, as Huxeley has said in his *Brave New World* that love is as necessary as food and shelter. Swami Vivekananda urged not only this human necessity, but also its divine necessity as the foremost.

Some of the sources of this cycle theory of history that attracted Swami Vivekananda can be found out from his own statements In one place he writes, 'We read in the *Mahabharata* that the whole world was in the beginning peopled with Brahmins, and that as they began to degenerate they became divided into different castes, and that when the cycle turns round they will all go back to that Brahminical origin.' (*The Complete Works,* Vol. III, pp. 197-98).

It seems though he claimed a process of unity—a homogeneous progress, he did not mean it to be a singular cyclic process like the other monists or absolutists History has so many wheels or circles, and various are the movements of History. Therefore, he spoke of many cycles. For example, 'Three cycles of Buddhism were five hundred years of the Law, five hundred years of images and five hundred years of Tantrast' (*ibid.,* Vol. VIII, p. 265).

The common criticism against the cyclical theory is—Time is unreal if History is purely cyclical, for if the future is a mere repetition of the past then these future events are really the past events It is said again that Time loses its temporality—it becomes less real, if it is a moving image of eternity, if History is a continual repetition of the same timeless ideas or forms

Naturally, the whole issue turns into a metaphysics of time, which it is not possible here to deal with But already it has been said that History is not time It is not equivalent to time even It is a process from here to eternity It is timeless both at its source and everywhere But no doubt it manifests itself or appears on the screen of Time Time-consciousness is a human accompaniment We read History in time Yet, History is not repetition in so far as its contents are concerned Its aim is to transcend and to go beyond the circle of Time In its outward form, it is cycle only Moments come and go in the process of time But they are not the same identical moments In the flight of History, millions of such moments are appearing and disappearing And each moment is filled in with new events and matter These moments are like carriers leading to the Universal.

As Swami Vivekananda said, the two aspects of History—the spiritual and the material, the real and the apparent are very important in this connection The spiritual aspact of History is timeless Its temporal side is in the material manifestation They are like two wings. The infinite flight of History is symbolically represented in the cyclic from Swami Vivekananda points at a timeless march of History—a voyage of spirit seeking the freedom of the individual form the shackles of time, from Maya altogether History is transcendental process. Behind the so-called appearance and reappearance of History, there is the eternal process, and there History is nothing but a timeless spirit To an Advaitin, History is nothing but a mirage—manifestation of Maya in space and time History is not real in itself. Its reality is in the beyond and the behind—the consciousness and the spirit within. Therefore, History is ultimately transcendental and an all-pervasive Universal. History is neither a nation nor a geography.

35

IF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA WERE NOW IN AMERICA

C H MacLachlan

Seventy-five years ago a young Hindu monk made his appearance in Chicago as a delegate to the Parliament of Religions at the world-famous Columbian Exposition He came from years spent as a wanderer travelling from one end of India to the other He had been a witness to the poverty and ignorance of his own people, about whose glorious past he was proudly aware Now he was possessed by a fierce determination to do something to bring help to the millions he had seen starving for knowledge as well as food He came wearing an orange silk robe and a new monastic name Born Narendra Nath Datta, he was now to become renowned as Swami Vivekananda

To the Maharaja of Mysore the Swami had confided his plan India's possession, he said, was philosophical and spiritual, but Indian society needed modern scientific ideas and thorough organic reform He proposed an exchange in which India would share its spiritual treasure with the West, and he hoped in return to obtain enough of the West's material resources to provide the poorer classes of India with education to develop their lost individuality He himself would go to America to preach the gospel of Vedanta to the Western nations [1] He complained that the Vedanta had been treated as the possession of a sect rather than the perennial source of universal inspiration that it was.

Swamiji reacted enthusiastically to the dynamic spectacle

created to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus's landing in the new world. America's organized power, achieved through the co-operation of leaders of business, science and industry, were an inspiration to him. Here was a country where money flowed like rivers. Americans, he reported, were good-natured, kind and truthful. He was even more impressed in some respects with the women than with the men because they were able to make constructive use of the leisure created by wealth.

But the Swami also reported an unfavourable observation. Enjoyment, he had discovered, was a religion with the Americans, and it was not long before he became convinced that the American's luxury and comfort, and even his necessities were obtained at an excessive cost. 'The Americans are so rich that they spend money like water.' he wrote during the August of his arrival, and by forced legislation keep the price of everything so high that no other nation on earth can approach it. Every common coolie earns nine to ten rupees a day, and spends it.' The money he had when he left India was nearly gone, and so he added : 'All those rosy ideas we had before starting have melted, and I have now to fight against impossibilities.'[2]

Only the very few in America could enjoy leisure and luxury together The industrial machine could be kept going only through constantly increased production. One had to produce in order to enjoy the fruits of production, but as the Americans's wants proliferated his leisure vanished The best part of his life was spent, as Thoreau had observed forty years before, 'earning money to enjoy a questionable liberty during the least valuable part of it.'[3] The American's dilemma, the Swami quickly learned, was the problem created by industrial society that had given him control of his environment without giving him control over himself.

Swami Vivekananda would have liked to see in India some of the material prosperity he had seen in the West. Especially he would have liked to make available for India's social improvement some of the scientific and technical skills he had observed in America. He would have liked to give to India the Westerners' ability to organize and combine their activities, something that he noted is only possible where there are mutual trust and co-operation. He would have liked to obtain for Indian women the freedom of thought and action enjoyed by American women. But he would have balked at the smallest compromise with the

spiritual heritage of India. However advanced the Western nations were in scientific culture, he said, they were infantile in their spiritual culture. He wanted no part of a materialism that encouraged undue ambition, competition and eventual death for the individual and the nation 'Competition,' he said in a lecture, 'rouses envy and kills the kindliness of the heart'.[4]

Three-quarters of a century before America's present pre-eminence in the world, the Swami saw it as the earth's most privileged nation The dollar, he said, supplied the place of caste in this country, and was capable of doing anything. America had more laws than any other nation, but they were little observed. In religion Americans practised either hypocrisy or fanaticism He was convinced that they needed more spiritual civilization and the Indians more material.

'It will take a long time for the Westerners to understand the higher spirituality,' he wrote 'If a religion brings them money, or health, or beauty, or long life, they will all flock to it, otherwise not.'[5]

He would almost certainly have considered the social and political ills that now afflict us as the inevitable consequences of the self-indulgence, the lawlessness, the hypocrisy and the lack of spirituality he observed in the 1890s. Narcotics addiction, crime, uninhibited pre-marital and extramarital sex, mental illness now at an all-time high, insurrections in once peaceful cities; are these not the results of symptoms he recognized and pointed out more than seventy years ago ? He also noted that although the wages of labour were the highest in the world, the fight between labour and capital was constant.

During that first journey to the West the Swami had a profound feeling of foreboding, a presentiment of tragic events to follow. 'Europe is on the edge of a volcano,' he said. 'If the fire is not extinguished by a flood of spirituality it will erupt.'[6] To Sister Nivedita he confided his premonitory fears. Social life in the West, he told her, was like a peal of laughter, but underneath it was a wail that ended in a sob. The fun and frivolity were all on the surface, and actually it was full of tragic intensity.[7]

Perhaps the Swami's popularity would have been more widespread—and his influence short-lived—if he had preached an easier gospel. But the religion he taught was anything but easy in practice. The lectures he gave before his American audiences

aimed at a spirituality that could never be anything but a slow growth. He never promised quick, showy results He spoke much of strength through control of the mind. He spoke of renunciation as opposed to self-indulgence. He spoke of non-resistance. And he spoke of realization. These, he assured his listeners, are all attainable in this life, and he painted vivid pictures of their rewards. But he was just as definite about the long and laborious practice they entailed. Restraint, he warned, does not come in a day, but by long continued practice How does one obtain control over his mind ? 'It is a tremendous work, not to be done in a day. Only after a patient, continuous struggle for years can we succeed'.[8] Renunciation, he warned, is even more difficult. It comes after one has fulfilled his desire for pleasure and power and found them disillusioning. Until then one cannot reach a state of calmness, serenity and self-surrender. But few ever reach that stage. 'I do not know if I have seen twenty persons in my life who are really calm non-resisting, and I have travelled over half the world.'[9]

Obviously such religion could make no appeal to the masses. It was for the few and for the very few He took his stand, as Sister Nivedita has said, in what was noblest and best in those he sought out, and his search was for followers who could also be leaders. 'Give me a genuine man,' he said in a letter to a friend, 'I do not want masses of converts.'[10] Like other great teachers he believed in the power of the few dedicated persons to transform the many. 'A handful of men can throw the world off its hinges, provided they are united in thought, word and deed.'[11]

It could not have been difficult for a commanding personality like Vivekananda to attract followers. It must often have been more difficult to discourage those not suited to his high requirements But he knew intuitively those who would best serve his needs. 'Through the mercy of Ramakrishna,' he wrote to Mrs. Bull, 'my instinct "sizes up" almost infallibly a human face as soon as I see it.'[12] His followers must first of all be pure. They must be born leaders. They must be without any taint of selfishness or jealousy, and they must also be patient and persevering.

In 1900 Sir Earnest Shackleton, the famous Antarctic explorer, placed a small boxed advertisement in the *London Times*. It read : 'Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honour and recognition in case of success.' In

spite of this bleak prospect, men responded from all parts of England. What did Swami Vivekananda offer as a reward for the far rarer qualifications he demanded ? The thought could hardly have occurred to him The reward was in the service itself. Those who followed him lived lives of hardship with few comforts and conveniences, not even worldly honour or recognition. Yet followers come to him by the score from three continents.

The first impact the Swami made upon a person or an audience was impressive, but he had to be seen and heard for one to feel the full force of his personality. He was a man of heroic proportions, far greater than life-size. Those who know him only through his writings can have little idea of the intense interest his presence aroused even among the reserved and well-bred New Englanders in whose homes he was entertained during the weeks immediately preceding the opening of the Parliament of Religions. He was young, learned, handsome and already regarded by many as a saint. He had the look, Sister Nivedita later wrote, 'of mingled gentleness and loftiness that one sees on the faces of those who live much in meditation, that look, perhaps, that Raphael has painted for us on the brow of the Sistine Child.'[13] And his voice when he chanted Sanskrit verses, reminded her of Gregorian music in the churches of England. One friend described his 'unlimitedness' : 'I could never touch the bottom—or top—or sides. The amazing sing of him ! Oh, such natures make one so free.'[14] A lesser man would have had his head turned by the adulation that seemed about to engulf the Swami. But his head was not turned. Great power and great humility were co-tenants in this great soul. One American lady said he impressed her as having no ego at all. The adulation was something to be endured but not enjoyed. He never forgot for an instant the mission he had been given by his Master, Sri Ramakrishna.

The precepts he taught were, of course, the precepts of perfection, and the men and women he selected as leaders were those in whom he recognized a divine discontent with the world. His search was for that 'true spirituality' which Sister Nivedita was quick to learn must be contemptuous and intolerant of the things of this world.[15] To Sister Nivedita, when she was still Miss Margaret Noble, he wrote : "It is no superstition with you, I am sure, you have the making in you of a world-mover, and others will also come. Bold words and bolder deeds are what we want,

Awake, awake, great one ! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep ?'[16]

Weakness is the cause of all suffering, the Swami told his American audiences. People lie, steal, kill and commit other crimes because they are weak. Strength is the only medicine that will cure this disease. One becomes strong through mastery of one's own mind. With persistent practice one can learn to concentrate the mind and eventually control it.[17]

Children, he pointed out, are always being told to be good, not to lie and not to steal; but no one ever tells them how they can avoid doing such things. Why should they not steal ?[18] Today he might ask why they should not cheat in examinations, practise violence, take narcotics, pilfer merchandise in department stores, and do so many other awful things. Until mastery of the mind is taught, children will not learn how to behave morally as a matter of intent.

The Swami was not suggesting that the parents of these children acted morally as a matter of intent. He believed that people in general are scarcely more moral than the animals. They are only held down by the whips of society. He spelled it out bluntly in a lecture : 'If society said today "I will not punish you if you steal", we should just make a rush for each other's property. It is the policeman that makes us moral, and we are really little better than animals. We understand how much this is so in the secret of our own hearts.'[19]

He might have pointed out that the counsel of many parents is ignored or rejected because it is so much at odds with their own behaviour. They have failed to practise what they preach. He would have recognized the revolutionary movements among so many young people as a reaction against the meaninglessness of a culture that has no solid spiritual foundation. Might he not have seen even the extremes of eccentric behaviour in our youth as a misdirected spiritual quest, a search for the ocean up the river ?

Swami Vivekananda regarded self-restraint as the greatest manifestation of power, and the foundation of religion. Love, truth, and unselfishness can only be won through control of the mind. What we think we become. Evil thoughts will determine our actions in spite of all we can do to prevent it. Our pious pretensions will only stamp us as hypocrites, for the character formed by evil thoughts will express itself in hatred and violence,

Talk of love will deceive no one if there is no real love in our hearts. Sri Krsna called Arjuna a hypocrite because he saw his unwillingness to do battle with his kinsmen as cowardice and not as love · 'Thou talkest like a wise man, but thy actions betray thee to be a coward; therefore stand up and fight !'[20] The love of God and neighbours can only be won through self-discipline and daily practice. It cannot be obtained by church attendance and assent to religious teachings. We are weak because we have failed to practise the daily restraints real religion imposes on the passions and the ego.

The Swami would not have been deceived by the pseudo-theological jargon of the 'new morality'. He would certainly not have agreed with some of today's teachers of ethics that evil means may be used to attain a good end. He would not have granted that the end justifies the means. He would have found the ethicist's deliberate compassion tainted with ego. In spite of his good intentions he would have regarded him as an ignorant blunderer in people's lives; a man who, with no direct experience of Reality, could not resist meddling in the moral and religious problems of his neighbours. And he would have been genuinely shocked to learn that apologists of the new morality are convinced that Christ's love, like their own, was not a thing of the inner feeling and the full heart, but mere benevolence and good will. He often warned against listening to anyone teach religion who did not manifest the highest ideal. To describe the love of Jesus a mere benevolence and good will would to him have been to degrade the ideal All codes of ethics, he sain, must be based on renunciation.[21] And he was un-compromising in his insistence upon the whole purpose of ethics :

> 'Utilitarian standards cannot explain the ethical relations of men, for in the first place we cannot derive any ethical laws from considerations of utility. Without the supernatural sanction, as it is called, or the perception of the superconscious, as I prefer to term it, there can be no ethics. Without the struggle towards the Infinite, there can be no ideal. Any system that wants to bind men down to the limits of their own societies is not able to find an explanation for the ethical laws of mankind.'[22]

Swami Vivekananda's basic message, like the messages of all great teachers, was for the few, and he wanted these to exemplify the highest ideal in their own lives. He didn't perhaps expect his message to reach directly into the lives of those whose needed bread more than they needed religion. He recognized that all persons do not have spiritual hunger. But he knew that in time all could be raised to higher levels of understanding, and eventually learn the meaning of life for themselves. Meanwhile there were practical ways of helping those who were not ready for religion. Something of his plan for the poor and suffering millions of India was revealed in a letter to the Maharaja of Mysore :

> 'There are thousands of single-minded, self-sacrificing sannyasins in our country, going from village to village, teaching religion. If a part of them can be organized as teachers of secular things also, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a camera, a globe, some maps, etc. They can teach a great deal of astronomy and geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about different nations, they can give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a lifetime through books. This requires an organization, which again means money. Men enough there are in India to work out this plan, but alas ! they have no money . . . After seeking help in my own country and failing to get any sympathy from the rich, I came to this country through your Highness' aid.'[23]

Doing good to others was the one universal religion, he wrote in an encouraging letter to his fellow disciple, Swami Brahmananda. Doctrines and dogmas, he said, have no power to touch the heart. But men and women, young and old, can grasp the religion of one who lives the life of it.[24]

'The more heart you will be able to manifest the greater will be the victory you achieve,' he wrote to Swami Akhandananda. 'It is only a few that understand the language of the brain, but everyone, from the Creator down to a clump of grass, understands the language that comes from the heart.'[25]

'Only one idea was burning in my brain,' he wrote from India

in the summer of 1897, 'to start the machine for elevating the Indian masses, and that I have succeeded in doing to a certain extent.'[26]

His letters alone reveal the immense load of work that he willingly undertook in his efforts to 'start the machine.' The whole of his life had been a preparation for the task which in so short a time destroyed his health. The goals he set for others were trifling compared with those he set for himself. He undertook an enormous program of lectures, meetings and organizational work in America and England, while he scouted out potential leaders; carried on an extensive correspondence with scores of men and women from the poor and humble to the rich and powerful; raised the money and did the basic planning for the Ramakrishna Order, planned Belur Math and Advaita Ashrama, and gave help, encouragement and spiritual guidance to thousands.

What did Swami Vivekananda contribute to the spiritual life of America during the years he spent here ? He was an honoured and respected visitor in many American homes. He made his home, at one time or another, in many of our great cities, among them Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco. He understood Americans and made many warm and lasting friendships among them. If he pointed out shortcomings he did no less for his fellow Indians. But he gave encouragement and help to both. He established Vedanta Societies in New York and San Francisco. He defined and spelled out the meaning and significance of Vedanta in lectures which have become an important part of its literature in modern times. He exemplified the highest of these teachings in his own life and person, and in doing so attracted disciples and devoted followers wherever he went He cultivated ground that is even now bearing fruit and will be increasingly productive in the years to come. He taught than in helping others we help ourselves, and gave utterance to many expressions among which the following is characteristic :

'Helping others physically, by removing their physical needs, is indeed great; but the help is greater according as the need is greater and according as the help is far-reaching. If a man's wants can be removed for an hour, it is helping him indeed; if his wants can be removed for a year, it will be more help to him; but if his wants can be removed for ever, it is surely the greatest help that can be given him.

36

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : THE PRACTICAL VEDANTIN

R.P. Varma

I

In the year 1863, a child named Narendra was born in a rich, renowned and religious family of Duttas of Calcutta, to Vishwanath Dutta and Bhuwneshwari Devi, who possessed qualities of both head and heart None but Providence knew that it was this child who was to become a dynamic prophet, who was to shake the whole world, and who was to become the spiritual leader of humanity This little naughty child, who teased his sisters and mother, and dreamt of 'becoming a coachman, was known, in future, as Vivekananda

His early education began in a liberal religious atmosphere where his mother taught him elementary English and told him tales from *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat*. At six he was sent to *Pathashala* and then to Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar Metropolitan Institution from where he passed Enterance Examination in the first division His intelligence was keen and memory sharp Physically too, he was robust, well-built and muscular and was a fine sportsman of his day After passing the Enterance Examination, he joined Presidency College and General Assembly's Institution and studied thoroughly English Literature, European History, Western Philosophy, Science, Art, Music and Medicine He read Spencer, Mill, Kant, Schopenhauer and Comte

Intellectually, therefore, he was a versatile genius.

Religion and spirituality seemed to display themselves in him from the early childhood. His meeting with Ramkrishna was a turning point, as it changed the entire course of his life. When Narendra came to see Ramkrishna the latter immediately recognised his spiritual potentialities and exclaimed, "Lord, I know you are that ancient sage Nara, the Incarnation of Narayana born on earth to remove the miseries of mankind."[1] "I was taken aback by his conduct," wrote Vivekananda later, "I thought he must be stark mad."[2] The sceptic Narendra put him the question, "Sir, have you seen God." "Yes, I see Him just as I see you here"—came the reply. Narendra was impressed with the answer but could not reconcile it to his monomanic behaviour. After two more such meetings, however, the obstinate, the sceptic, the rationalist Narendra passed away and Vivekananda was born

Narendra's faith in the Guru, and the new vision now took him to heights after heights in spirituality. At the feet of his Master he learnt Vedant and means to attain *Nirvakalpa Samadhi.* To him, Ramkrishna unfolded the mystic secrets of ancient wisdom, him he charged with the responsibility of looking after the spiritual elevation of his disciples, to him he entrusted the tasks of serving the suffering humanity. At the time of his departure from the world, the Master touched him and made him experience the bliss of *Nirvakalpa Samadhi* which Narendra had yearned for, but he forbade him to enter into it unless he fulfilled his misssion.[3]

The result of the meeting, contacts, and relationship of Narendra with Ramkrishna was far reaching. The Master remained a meek servant of God, the disciple became a leader of men. To *jnana* was added *Bhakti,* to *Vairagya* was added *Karma.*

After the passing away of Ramkrishna, Narendra organised his fellow monks into an Order, took the vow of *Sanyasa* and Service with them, and established Ramkrishna Mission If his soul yearned for communion with God, his mind became restless for the service of man. From now onwards, he became the wandering monk and travelled throughout the length and breadth of India. On the Himalayas, in the plains to the Kanyakumari—he went on foot. He obtained first hand experience of the glory

and greatness that was India in the past, saw with his own eyes the degrading condition of India sunk in ignorance, poverty and disease, and chalked out a programme of regenerating uplifting and improving the condition of the masses for the glorious future of India.

With this mission in mind, he sailed for the U.S.A. to attend the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and assumed the name of Vivekananda. When he came to address the Parliament, he was unknown to everybody. Without any preparation he spoke on Hinduism and proved it as the greatest and most universal of religions. When his lecture finished, he as highly applauded. The unknown monk came to be known all over the world in a moment and acclaimed as a Prophet, an Apostle, and a Leader. On his return to India, he was not just a monk of Ramkrishna Order, he was an acknowledged Prophet of new India. He worked hard for the masses, he delivered lectures on Vedanta here and there, and made Indians self-conscious.

II

FORMATIVE INFLUENCES ON VIVEKANANDA'S THOUGHT

The philosophy of Vivekananda owed its origin and development to three sources. The first was his vast and deep knowledge of western litrature, philosophy and science as well as Indian Philosophy. He came in contact with the best and the greatest minds of Europe through English language He studied the Indian scriptures through Sanskrit. The result was that he became liberal in his thought. He largely drew upon the treasure of wisdom contained in the Vedanta.[4]

The second source of his thought came from his *Guru* Sri Ramkrishna, who taught him the secrets of *Advaita* Vedanta and the wisdom of the Rishies of India. Sri Ramkrishna turned him from a scholar to a seer, from an agnostic to a believer, from a *Jnani* to a *Bhakta*.

The third formative influence was supplied by his own observations of contemporary India. He saw with his own eyes the wretched condition of Indian masses, compared it with the glorious past, and set before himself the task of resurrecting India.

All these sources influenced the philosophy and mission of his life.[5] But the most abiding influence upon him was that of Sri Ramkrishna, referring to whom he acknowledged : "all the ideas that I preach are only an attempt to echo his words."

III

VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY

His philosophy is Vedantic based on the beliefs that God alone is real, that man is God himself, and that this realisation of divinity in oneself and others is the goal of life. Vivekananda, however, modifies what he considered to be classical Vedanta. He refused to believe that Vedanta is theoretical and held that it is practical.[6] He did not agree with the view that Vedanta teaches quietism and renunciation.[7] He did not also reconcile himself to the view of individual salvation when the rest of humanity groaned and sighed in misery and held that Vedanta could be practised in this very world.

Two points deserve mention in this connection. One is that inspite of the best motives. Vivekananda did not remain true to the teachings of his spiritual preceptor who would renounce world for God and be lost in Him.[8] This was a deviation from the philosophy of Ramkrishna, in whose thought the element of spirituality is all supreme, and worldly life with its zeal for reforms and philanthropy, is looked down upon. In the philosophy of Vivekananda, spirituality is still dominant but is mingled with humanitarianism and it is believed to be incomplete and futile without it. The second point is that Vedanta in the hands of Vivekananda becomes an instrument for revitalising and regenerating India by making the masses strong, self-reliant and great.

Thus, in the philosophy of Vivekananda, contemplation and activity, *Nirvakalpa Samadhi* and humanitarian work, God and the world run parallel to each other. Neither spirituality is abandoned nor social service is neglected. They are synthesised.

IV

VIEWS ON RELIGION

Vivekananda's views on religion come out logically from his philosophy of Neo-Vedantism Religion, according to him, meant the unity of man and God, man and man and service of man because man is God. Every practice, that helped man reach God, became religion for Vivekananda. Religion would rest on faith in God and Vivekananda would look upon faith as an anchor and solace for man in his failings and misery.[9] His God is Personal and living God, with whom, personal and intimate relationship can be established.

Vivekananda turned religion from metaphysics to ethics, from theory to practice, from static mass of rituals to dynamic faith. He secularised, socialised and nationalised religion, making it an instrument for social and national reawakening. He pleaded for one universal religion, without any sect or creed, ritual or dogma, stamp of name, and made it a fundation stone of love and brotherhood. Lastly, he created for Hinduism a place of honour in the world, he gave it a "social purpose" and above all he brought back the lost faith of Hindus in Hinduism and made it "aggressive "[10] And this was his greatest service to Hinduism.[11]

V

VIEWS ON SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Like his predecessors, Vivekananda was keenly interested in the social reconstruction of India but unlike other social reformers, he laid greatest emphasis on doing actual good to the masses rather than on establishing societies for reforms. Instead of believing that society is bad, he held that society is good and that it needs to be better. For him the only cause of social and national degradation was that masses were ignored only lip sympathy was paid to them so far. His due attention was drawn to the social problems of his day particularly of caste; untouchability and the sad plight of the masses moved him to tears and

he would cry out in agony at their misery.

Vivekananda believed in *Varnashrama Dharma* and caste system, and pointed out its necessity for advancement.[12] But he did not advocate caste system in the modern sense of the term. He depreciated and denounced the current caste system as the dividing agent.[13]

Deadly opposed to untouchability, Vivekananda ridiculed it as "*don't touchism.*"[14] No other evil received such a strong blow from him as this. He gave a clarion call to his countrymen to give up this narrow, and sectarian idea, if they wanted progress. This untouchability could, he believed, be removed by Brahmans and the outcastes themselves[15] Holding the low castes also responsible for their downtrodden condition, he exhorted them this "the only way to raise your condition is to study Sanskrit."[16]

The utter poverty and the miserable condition of the masses moved him so deeply that he made it a sacred cause for which he was prepared to lay down his life. For him, poverty was the only cause of all ills.[17] He completely identified himself with the poor.[18] Day and night he would weep for the miserable.[19] He decried the reformers who talked of doing good to the poor but did actually nothing He asked, "how many people really weep for the sorrows and sufferings of the millions of poor in India."[20]

Vivekananda's attitude to women was that of high veneration and regard He held woman to be the very manifestation of the Divine, and respected mother very much.[21] For him, "the ideal of womanhood in India is motherhood." His heart bled at the sight of the miserable and the degrading condition of Indian women which was the cause of national downfall.[22] He advocated the cause of their improvement and said, "the upliftment of women must come first."[23]

VI

VIEWS ON EDUCATION

The problem of education received great attention from Vivekananda. He vigorously pleaded for education of the masses irrespective of any consideration and believed that by

educating people alone, could India be raised in status and position. Education is the index of civilization.[24] He was for education of all and not of a few. He advocated the cause of socialisation of education and compulsory education.[25] He decried the modern education as unpractical, bookish, and negative and stood for practical and positive education. It was "man-making" education in his opinion that India needed.[26] He wanted intellectual, moral and spiritual education for the masses, so that they could become men of faith, courage and character. He was never tired of repeating the education must be imparted to the poor.[27]

VII

VIEWS ON NATIONALISM

Vivekananda was a "Patriot Monk" or as his brother, Bhupendra Nath Dutta held, he was a "Patriot-Prophet." Vivekananda loved his motherland dearly and passionately. He felt proud to call himself Hindu and said, "I am proud that I am a countryman of Yours."[28] He sympathised with and wept for the sorrows and sufferings of his country; he identified himself with its hopes and aspirations; he worked for its resurrection and regeneration. He loved India as a nation, not in the geographical or political sense of the term but in the sense of the people or the masses that lived in it. Feeling for the motherland was in his view, real patriotism [29] He decried the apathy of Indians towards India when he pointed out, "did the world ever see a nation with less patriotism than Indian.[30] Resurrection of India meant for him that of the masses who ought not to have been ignored.[31]

Day in and day out nothing but the thought of his motherland preoccupied him and he exhorted his countrymen to divert all their attention to her and make her their God.[32] He wanted to infuse race-consciousness among Indians to make them self-conscious.[33] He did not expect anything from the upper classes of India towards the cause of national awakening and criticised them in uncompromising terms.[34] He believed in the ideal of unity and harmony.[35]

But while Vivekananda was patriot and a nationalist to the

core of his heart, he did not shut himself up in the four walls of his country. His love for people knew no geographical barriers. He himself said, "my interests are international." He denounced exclusiveness and hatred of others.[36] He advocated the exchange of thought and inter-communication between India and other nations. He pleaded for the love and harmony of all nations and declared, "we must mix, therefore, with all the races of the earth."[37] This internationalism, however, was far from being political. It was spiritual based on the Vedantic principle of universality of self.

Thus, Swami Vivekananda was an Indian first and last.[38] It also be observed that no predecessor of his in the 19th century loved the masses and worked for them so much as he did. Vivekananda's contribution to Indian Renaissance is immensely rich. He expounded Neo-Vedantism, which, in the words of Romain Rolland, "spread like burning alcohol in the veins of intoxicated India.[39] The greatest contribution of Vivekananda is that he laid the foundation of New India to be born in the both century.[40]

Notes and References

1. Vide, *Life of Vivekananda*, Eastern and Western Disciples, Advaita Ashrama, Almorah, 1949, (IV Ed), p 49
2. *Ibid* , p. 46.
3. In the words of Ramkrishna, "Just as a treasure is locked up in a box, so will this realisation have just had to be locked up and the key shall remain with me . . . when you have finished my work the treasure will be unlocked again . . . . "—Vide : *Life of Vivekananda* (*Quoting*), p. 144).
4 Cf. Romain Rolland, "The material of Vivekananda's ideal belongs to the thought inherent in the depths of Hinduism."—Vide . *Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, Advaita Ashram, Mayavati Almorab, (IV Edition 1953).
5. Cf. the words of Sister Nivedita, "When he preaches Vedanta . . . he is for the most part drawing from the Sanskrit books of past ages. When he talks of Bhakti, was see before us the very personality of the Master himself. When we read his speech before the Chicago Conference, . . . we find ourselves of something gathered by his own labours out of his own experience."—Vide : *The Master as I saw Him*. Udbodhan Office, Calcutta, (VII Edition, 1953), pp. 79-80.
6 According to Vivekananda, "the Vedanta as religion must be intensely practical."—Vide : *Complete Works of Vivekananda*, Vol. II, p. 289.

7 Cf Vivekananda's observation . "real activity, which is the goal of Vedanta is combined with eternal calmness "—Vide . *Ibid*, pp. 290-91
8 In this connection Nirvedananda observes : "he made important practical deductions from the Master's message that might go to exalt both individual as well as collective life "—Vide : Bhattacharya (Ed). *Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol IV, p V, p 692
9. Compare Vivekananda's observation, "so long as there is such a thing as weakness in the world, so long as there is such a thing as weakness in the human heart, so long as there is a cry going out of the heart of man, in his very weakness, there shall be a faith in God."—Vide *Complete Works of Vivekananda*, Vol I, p 20
10 It is worthwhile quoting Sister Nivedita here, "the aim of his whole life was as he had said to me in Kashmir, 'to make Hinduism aggressive, like Christianity and Islam "—Vide *Ibid*, p 159.
11 To quote Bhupendra Nath Dutta here, "it is the equalitarian social polity that Swamiji wanted for Hinduism."—Vide . *Swami Vivekananda, Patriot Prophet*, Nababharat Publishers, Calcutta, 1954, p. 272.
12 According to Vivekananda, "this system of division into different *Varnas* is the stepping stone to civilization making one rise higher and higher in proportion to one's learning and culture."—Vide · *Complete Works of Vivekananda*, Vol. V, p 439.
13 In the words of Vivekananda himself · "it is no use fighting among the castes It will divide us all the more, weaken us all the more, degrade us all the more "—Vide *Ibid*, Vol. III, p 291
14 Cf Vivekananda's observation We are don't touchists Our God is in the cooking pot"—Vide · *Ibid*, Vol III, p. 167.
15. In the words of Vivekananda again, "The only way to bring about the levelling of the caste it to appropriate the culture, the education, which is the strength of the higher castes"—Vide : *Ibid*, p. 294
16 *Ibid*, p. 291
17. To quote Vivekananda, "The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India, is the condition of the poor"—Vide : *Ibid*, Vol VI, p. 308.
18 In this connection Vivekananda held "I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint But I am poor, I love the poor".—Vide : *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p 45.
19 Vivekananda would cry in anguish, "Oh, how my heart ached to think of what we think of the poor, the low in India. They have no chance, no escape, no way to climb up. The poor, the low, the sinner in India have no friends no help " Vide · *Ibid*, p 11.
20 *Ibid*, p 23
21. Vivekananda said, "to me, Mother's grace is a hundred thousand times more valuable than Father's" Vide. *Ibid*, Vol. VI, p 417.
22 To quote Vivekananda · "we are horrible sinners and our degradation is due to our calling women 'despicable worms,' gateways to hell"—Vide *Ibid*, p. 224.
23. *Ibid*, Vol. V, p. 445.
24 Vivekananda pointed out : 'a nation is advanced in proportion as education

and intelligence spread among the masses."—Vide : *Ibid*, Vol. IV, p 415.

25 In this connection Vivekananda held, "intelligence must not remain the monopoly of the cultured few, it will be disseminated from higher to lower classes. Education is coming and compulsory education will follow"—Vide : *Ibid*, Vol. V, p 129

26 To quote Vivekananda's own words, "education is not the amount of information. We must have life building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas " Vide : *Ibid*, Vol III, p 302.

27 In this connection Vivekananda preached : "If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him" —Vide . *Ibid*, Vol IV, p 309.

28 *Ibid*, Vol III, p. 381.

29 Vivekananda's criterion of patriotism can thus be envisaged in his own words : "do you feel that millions are starving today . do you feel restless . . . sleepless . . . have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies. This is the first step to become a patriot".—Vide *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 226

30. *Ibid.*, Vol. V, p. 63

31. Cf Vivekananda's observation · "I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses are once more well-educated, well fed, and well cared for "—Vide · *Ibid*, Vol. V, p 152

32. Vivekananda would exhort people thus : "for the next fifty years this alone shall be our keynote, this our great Mother India Let all other vain Gods disappear . . this is the only God that is awake: our own race"—Vide, *Ibid*, Vol. III, p. 300.

33 In fiery words Vivekananda would declare : "What India wants is a new electric fire to stir up a fresh vigour in the national veins." *Ibid.*, Vol V. p 44.

34. Vivekananda's soul stirring words were, "do you think you are alive. You are but mummies ten thousand years old. Let New India arise in your place Let her arise out of the peasant's cottage . . . from the grocer's shop . . . from the factory . from the groves and forests"—Vide : *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 301-09.

35. To quote Vivekananda's own words : "I believe that the *Satya Yuga* will come when there will be one Caste, one Veda, and peace and harmony. This idea of *Satya Yuga* will revivify India "—Vide : *Ibid*, Vol. V, p. 27

36. Vivekananda pointed out, "the one great cause of the downfall and the degradation of India was the building of a wall of custom whose foundation was hatred of others—round the nation."—Vide : *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, pp. 310-11.

37. In Vivekananda's own words, "if India wants to raise herself once more it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throw them broadcast among the nations of the earth and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her "—Vide : *Ibid.*

38 According to Bhupendra Nath Dutta, "Swami Vivekananda was a hundred percent India. 'Indiaism' was his religion."—Vide ; *Ibid.*, p. 210.

39 Quoted by Bhupendra Nath Dutta—Vide *Ibid*, p 212

40 To quote Romain Rolland, "from his ashes has sprung anew the conscience of India "—Vide *Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, p 7

37

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA : THE MAN WITH A MISSION

VERINDER GROVER*

Swami Vivekananda was one of the greatest thought-movers of modern times He was the spiritual precursor of India's freedom movement. The voice of Vivekananda is much more powerful today than it was at the beginning of this century when first he swept the boards, preaching the gospel of strength and universal love to India and the West. He call for renunciation and service to humanity has now taken a new meaning His prophecies, viewed in the light of critical human situations today, reveal the expansive divine stature of the man who uttered them. He was a physician who knew not only the nature of the ailment but also administered the effective medicine to bring about its speedy cure He called for shedding narrow egoism and wanted the people to work for world solidarity and well-being of the downtrodden which has been recognised today as the essential feature for the survival of mankind

Swami Vivekananda's message inspired a generation of leaders and people of India to give their best. Speaking about Swami Vivekananda, C. Rajagopalachari said, "But for him we would not have gained our freedom We, therefore, owe everything to Swami Vivekananda . . May his faith, his courage and

*Former Reader, Department of Political Science and Managing Editor, *Indian Political Science Review*, University of Delhi, Delhi

wisdom inspire us so that we may keep safe the treasure received from him."

The influence of Swami Vivekananda in the mind of nationalist India is well-known. Indian nationalism as understood by Swami Vivekananda is not the same as understood today. To him, a nation meant the people. He wanted the upliftment and freedom of the Indian people. He also wanted their material and moral advancement. By the word 'people' he did not mean a political term, but the poor masses who constitute the major portion of humanity living in India.

The keynote of his attitude towards the Indian national question was to uplift the Indian masses by educating them and by instilling in them the feeling of consciousness. He clearly stated that without the uplift of the majority of the people of India, who are lying in a debased condition, Indian regeneration was not possible. Swami Vivekananda was clear in his vision that the degeneration among the Indians was not because of political enslavement, but because of the loss of freedom of all sorts. He denounced the class character of Indian civilisation and as a remedy wanted to educate, and uplift the masses on the basis of equality, because in them he saw the hope of India. The only practical way to unite the masses of divergent sects and communities in a homogeneous body, is through a new culture which will not bear any class or communal character, but will evolve out of the psychology of the masses as the solution to the complex communal and sectarian questions that have been tearing asunder India of the present era.

Swami Vivekananda wanted the people against the disastrous consequences of making politics as a means of national salvation of India What is happening in our political life at the moment is indeed a tragic fulfilment of politics as a pursuit of state power. Vivekananda's prophetic eyes foresaw that this pursuit of state power would in future become a pursuit of personal power, which ambitious politicians would place above the nation Today, we are facing a number of problems because we have not listened to the great voice warning us against the political approach to our national problems. If today we are unhappy about the vulgarity and shallowness which have entered into our public life, where a public cause is essentially a matter of private ambition, it is because we have not paid any heed to the teachings of Vivekananda. If we

deplore the state of affairs in which politics is corrupting our society at all levels, we must blame ourselves for disregarding Vivekananda's views of the dangers of politics.

Paying a tribute to Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo said . "Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if ever there was one, a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy We perceive his influence still working significantly We know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India " In praise of Swami Vivekananda, Romain Rolland said "He was less than 40 years of age when he lay stretched upon the pyre But the flame of that pyre is still alight today From his ashes, like those of the phoenix of old, has sprung anew the conscience of India—the magic bird—faith in her unity and in the Great Message, brooded over from Vedic times by the drawing spirit of his ancient race—the message for which it must render account to the rest of mankind "

Swami Vivekananda's compassion for the poor and the down-trodden, and the defeated was a passion

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Avyaktananda, Swami, "Vivekananda—The Nation Builder" (Ramkrishna Ashram, Bankipore, Patna, 1929).

Athalya, D.V , "Swami Vivekananda—A Study", (495 Narayan Path, Poona City, 1929)

Anand, Mulk Raj, "Is there a contemporary civilization ?" (Asia Publishing House, Bombay-1, 1953)

Alexander, Hubert G , "Language and Thinking", (D Van Nostrand Company, Inc , Printed in United States of America, 120, Alexander Street Princeton, New Jersey)

Ayer, Alfred Jules, "Language, Truth and Logic", (Victor Gollancz Ltd , Fourteenth Impression of the Second edition, 1960)

Atmaprana, Pravrajika, "Swami Vivekananda and Harmony of religions and Religious sects", 'Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume', edited by R C Mazumdar, Swami Sambuddhananda, Calcutta, 1963)

Ayer, A J , "Is Religious knowledge possible?", 'Approaches to the Philosophy of Religion' by Bronstein D J and Schulweis H M Prentice Hall, Inc , Fourth Printing, 1960)

Barth, A , (Authorised Translation by Rev. J Wood), "The Religions of India", (S Chand & Co , Sixth Edition, 1969).

Bourke, Vernon J , "Ethics", (The Macmillan Company, New York, Sixth Printing-1)

Broad, C D , "Five Types of Ethical Theory", (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd , 1971)

Bouquet, A C , "Comparative Religion", (Penguin Books Ltd., Fifth Reprint Edition, 1958)

Berry, Gerald L , "Religions of the world", (Barnes and Noble, Inc , New York, Second Edition, 1956).

Budhanada, Swami, "Can one be Scientific and Spiritual ?" (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, First Edition, 1973).

Bradley, Andrew C., "Ideals of Religion", (Macmillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1940).

Brown, Brian, "The Wisdom of Hindus", (Heritage Publishers, Delhi, 1973).

Banerjee, Jyoti Prasad, "Swami Vivekananda as a Patriot-Saint, Awakener of India and Nation-Builder", Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume (edited by R.C. Mazumdar, Calcutta, 1963).

Broom, Leonard & Selznick, Philip, "Sociology—A Text with Adapted Readings", (Harper and Row, London, Fourth Edition, 1968).

Chennakesavan, Sarasvati, "A Critical Study of Hinduism", (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1972).

Chatterjee, P B., "Principles of Ethics", (Bharati Printing Works, Calcutta, Sixteenth Edition, 1956).

Caird, Dr. John, "An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion", (Jackson Son & Co , Reprinted Seventh Edition, 1936).

Carnap, Rudolf, "Logical Foundations of Probability", (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, Second Impression, 1951).

Clark, Walter Houston, "The Psychology of Religion", (The Macmillan Company, New York, Third Printing, 1961).

Cave, Sydney, "An Introduction to the Study of Some Living Religions of East", (Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., London, Sixth Edition, 1959).

Chatterjee, Dr. S.C. & Datta, Dr. D.M., "An Introduction to Indian Philosophy", (University of Calcutta, Fourth Revised and enlarged Edition, 1950).

Choudhury, Roma, "Sociological views of Swami Vivekananda—His Ideas of Social Reforms—Uplift of Women and Masses", 'Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume' (Vivekananda Centenary Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, 1963).

Chelysev, Dr. Y., Swami Vivekananda, The Indian Humanist, Democrat and Patriot",—'Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume', (Swami Vivekananda Centenary Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, 1963).

Copleston, Fredrick, "Contemporary Philosophy" (Burnes & Oates, London, 1957).

Chatterjee, Suniti Kumar, "Swami Vivekananda—A World Figure", 'Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume', (edited by R.C. Mazumdar, Calcutta, 1963).

Chatterjee, Satischandra, "Swami Vivekananda's Neo-Vedantism and Its Practical Application", 'Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume' (edited by R.C. Mazumdar, Calcutta, 1963).

Dayal, Har, "Twelve Religions and Modern Life" (Modern Culture Institute, EDGWARE (Middlesex) England, (Printed in Great Britain by Unwin Brothers Ltd , Working 1938).

Datta, D.M., "The Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy", (The University of Calcutta, Calcutta Second Edition, 1961).

Das, Bhagavan (Compiled by), The Essential Unity of All Religions", (The Kashi Vidya Pith, Benaras, Second Edition, 1939).

Dewey, John, "Theory of the Moral Life", (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York, Third Edition, 1960).

Duff, Charles, "The Human Nature", (Watt & Co London, Definitive Edition, Thinker's Library, 1950)

Damodaran, K , "Indian Thought—A Critical Survey", (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1967).

Devaraja, N.K , "Hinduism and Christianity", (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969).

Devaraja, N K., (Edited by) : "Indian Philosophy Today", (The Macmillan Company of India Ltd., Delhi, 1975).

Das, Dr. D.S., "Influence of Swami Vivekananda on World Thought",—Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume' (edited by R.C. Mazumdar, Calcutta, 1973).

Dev, Govinda Chandra, "Swami Vivekananda's Ethics of Renunciation and Service", 'Swami Vivekananda's Centenary Memorial Volume' (edited by R.C. Mazumdar, Calcutta, 1963).

Dhar, S.N., "Swami Vivekananda in World's Perspective",—'Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume' (edited by R.C. Mazumdar, Calcutta, 1963).

Edwards, D.M., "The Philosophy of Religion", (Progressive Publishers, Calcutta, Second Impression, 1960).

Feaver, J. Clayton & Horosz William (Edited by), "Religion in Philosophical and Cultural Perspective", (Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Ltd., New Delhi, West Student Edition

(Macmillan Co., New York, 1920).
Johnson, Harry M., "Sociology—A Systematic Introduction", (Allied Publishers Private Ltd., Bombay, 1966).
Kane, Pandurang Vaman, "History of Dharmasastra, Vol. I", (Government Oriental Series—Class B, No. 6, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, No. 4, 1930).
———, "History of Dharmasastra, Vol. II", (Government Oriental Series—Class B, No. 6, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, No. 4, 1941).
Lilly, William, "An Introduction to Ethics", (Methuen & Co., Ltd., W.C., Third Reprint Edition, 1957).
Lal, Basant Kumar, "Contemporary Indian Philosophy", (Motilal Banarasidas, Patna, 1973).
Lee, Atkinson, "Groundwork of The Philosophy of Religion", Gerald Duckworth and Co., Ltd , London, Reprint Edition, 1951).
Lacombe, Oliver, "Swami Vivekananda On Practical Vedanta", 'Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume' (edited by R.C. Mazumdar, Calcutta, 1963)
Masih, Y., "Introduction to Religious Philosophy", (Motilal Banarasidas, Bharagava Bhushan Press, Varanasi, 1971).
Mackenzifie, John S , "A Manual of Ethics", (University Tutorial Press Ltd., London, Sixth Edition, 1941).
Montefiore, Alan, "A Modern Introduction to Moral Philosophy", (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, Third Impression, 1961).
Miltner, Charles C., "The Elements of Ethics", (The Macmillan Company, New York, Second revised Edition, 1951).
Moore, G E., "Ethics", (Oxford University Press, Second reprint Edition, 1972).
Maitra, Sushil Kumar, "The Ethics of the Hindus", (Published by Calcutta University Press, 1925).
Mukherjee, Radhakamal, "The Destiny of Civilization", (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1964)
———, "The Sickness of Civilization", (Allied Publishers Private Ltd., Bombay-1964).
Mashruwala, K G., "Gandhi and Marx",—(Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, Second Reprint Edition, 1956).
MacIntyre, Alastair, "A Short History of Ethics", (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1967).

Nehru, Jawaharlal, "Sri Ramkrishna and Swami Vivekananda", Advaita Ashrama Mayavati, Himalayas, Fifth Edition, 1972).

Pavitranand, Swami (Published by) "A Short Life of Swami Vivekananda", (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, 1940).

——, "The Disciples of Sri Ramkrishna", (Advaita Ashrama, Himalayas, 1943).

Pandit, M.P., "The Upanishads—Gateways of Knowledge", (Ganesh and Co., Madras, 1960).

Prasad, Guru, "An Introduction to the Study of Hinduism", (Thacker, Spink and Co., Calcutta, 1893).

Price, H.H., "Clarity is not Enough", (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1963).

Rolland, Romain (Translated from original French by E.F. Malcom Smith), "The Life of Ramkrishna", (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas, 1930).

——, "The Life of Vivekananda and The Universal Gospel", (Advaita Ashram, Seventh Impression, 1970)

Ramkrishnananda, Swami "Sri Ramkrishna and His Mission", (Ramkrishna Math, Madras, Second Edition, 1946).

Rogers, R.A.P., "A Short History of Ethics", (Macmillan and Co. Ltd., New York : Reprint 11th Edition 1964).

Raju, P.T., "Philosophical Traditions of India", (Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1971).

Robertson, Roland (Edited by), "Sociology of Religion", (Penguin Books Ltd., 1969).

Rao, P. Nagaraja, "Essays in Indian Philosophy and Religion", (Lalvani Publishing House, Bombay, 1971).

Radhakrishnan, Dr. S., "Eastern Religions and Western Thought", (Oxford University Press, London, Second Edition, 1940).

——, "East and West in Religion", (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, Third Impression, 1954).

——, "The Hindu View of Life", (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., The Macmillan Company, New York, Tenth Impression, 1957).

——, "Religion and Society", (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1947)

——, "Religion in a Changing World", Allen and Unwin Ltd., New York 1967)

Radhakrishnan, Dr. S., (Translated by), "The Bhagavadgita",

(George Allen and Unwin Ltd , London, Second Impression, 1949).

Radhakrishnan, Dr S., (Translated by), "The Bhagavadgita", (Blackie and Son Ltd., New Delhi, Fourth Indian Reprint, 1976).

——, "Indian Philosophy, Vol. I and II", (Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, Eighth Impression, 1958).

Swami, Ramananda Saraswati, (Ganesh and Co. Madras, 1959).

——, "Renascent Hinduism", (Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1966).

Sharma, Dr. D.S. ' The Master and the Disciple", (Sri Ramkrishna Math, Madras, 1947).

——, "Hinduism Through Ages", (Bhavan's Book University, New Delhi, 1955).

——, What is Hinduism ?", (Printed at The Madras Law Journal Press, Mylapore, Second Edition, 1941)

——, "Studies in The Renaissance of Hinduism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", The Banaras Hindu University, Banaras, 1944)

Sharma, I.C. (revised and edited by Stantly M. Daugert), "Ethical Philosophies of India", Allen and Unwin Ltd , London, 1963).

Sinha, Dr. Jadunath, 'A Manual of Ethics," (The Central Book Agency, Calcutta, Third Edition, 1947).

Stace, W.T., Religion and the Modern Mind", (Macmillan and Company Ltd., London, 1953).

Stevenson, Charles L., "Ethics and Language", (Yale University Press, Printed in U S.A., Seventh Printing, 1959).

Sen, K.M., "Hinduism—the world's oldest Faith", (Penguin Books Ltd., London, 1961).

Sharma, Dr. C.D., "A critical survey of Indian Philosophy", (Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, Second Issue, 1964).

Sengupta, Promode Bandhu, "A Hand Book of Social Philosophy", (Banerjee Publishers, Calcutta, 1965).

Sambuddhnanda, Swami, "Swami Vivekananda's Ideal of Renunciation and Service", Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume (edited by R.C Mazumdar, Calcutta, 1963).

Tow, Crawford Howell, ' Introduction to the History of Religions", (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, Fourth Impression, 1948).

Thomson, George, "An Essay on Religion", (Lawrence and

Wishart Ltd., London, 1949)

Tagore, Rabindranath, "Sadhana", (Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London, 1957).

———, "The Religion of Man", (Allen and Unwin Ltd , 1953).

Urban, Wilbur Marshall, "Fundamental of Ethics", (Henery Holt and Co., New York, Second Edition, 1958).

Vireswarananda, Swami, "Teachings of Sri Ramkrishna", (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas, 1934).

Vivekananda, Swami, "In Defence of Hinduism", (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas, 1963).

———, "The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. I", (Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, Eleventh Edition, 1962).

———, "The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. II", (Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, Mayavati Memorial Edition, Thirteenth Edition, 1976)

———, "The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda," Vol. III (Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, Eleventh Edition, 1973).

———, "The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda", Vol. IV, (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas, Eighth Edition, 1962).

———, "The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda", Vol. V, (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas, Seventh Edition, 1959).

———, "The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda", Vol. VI, (Advaita Ashram, Himalays, Seventh Edition, 1863).

———, The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda", Vol. VII, (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas, Fifth Edition, 1858).

———, "The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda", Vol. VIII, Advaita Ashram, Himalayas, Third Edition, 1959).

———, "Six Lessons on Raja-Yoga", (Udbodhan Office, Calcutta, Tenth Edition, 1976).

———, "The Message of Vivekananda Swami", (Mayavati, Himalayas, Fifth Impression, 1978).

———, "Jnana-Yoga", (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas, Twelfth Impression, 1970).

———, "To the Youth of India", (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas, Sixth Edition, 1975).

———, "Raja-Yoga", (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas, Sixth Edition, 1942).

———, "Practical Vedanta", Advaita Ashram, Himalayas, Third Edition, 1938).

Wilson, John, "Reason and Morals", (Cambridge University Press, 1961).

Williams, Sir Monier M., "Hinduism", (Rare Books, Delhi, First Indian Edition, 1971).
Wadia, A.R., "Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy of Religion", 'Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Volume' (edited by R.C. Mazumdar, Calcutta, 1963).
Wright, William K., "A History of Modern Philosophy", (The Macmillan and Co., New York, 13th Printing, 1955).
Wittgenstein, Ludwig, "Tractatus Logico", (Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, Ninth Impression, 1962).
Yale, John (Edited by), "What Religion is in the Words of Swami Vivekananda", (Phoenix House Ltd , 1962).
Zimmer, Heinrich (Edited by Josephs Campbell), "Philosophies of India," (Pantheon Books Inc , 1951).
Zaehner, R.C., "Hinduism", (Oxford University Press, 1962).

Journals and Magazines

Aiyer, Sir P S Sivaswami, "Sri Ramkrishna as I understand Him", *The Vedanta Kesari, Sri Ramkrishna Centenary Issue*, February and March 1936).
Aurobindo, Sri, "The Advent of Sri Ramkrishna", *The Vedanta Kesari, Sri Ramkrishna Centenary Issue*, February and March, 1936 (Ramkrishna Math, Madras, 1936).
Ayer, A J., "Demonstration of the Impossibility of Metaphysics", *Mind*, Vol. XLIII, 1934.
Bhattacharya, K., "Is Philosophy Linguistic Analysis ?, *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXII, No. 2, July 1959, (The Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, East Khandesh).
Bhajanananda, "Swami Vivekananda's Discoveries about India III", *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. LXXXII, January, 1977, (Published by Advaita Ashram, Himalayas).
——, "Swami Vivekananda's Discoveries About India IV", *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. LXXXII, February 1977, (Advaita Ashrama, Himalayas.)
——, "Swami Vivekananda's Discoveries About India V", *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. LXXXII , May 1977, (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas).
Budhananda, Swami, "Ramkrishna's Naren and Naren's Ramkrishna I", *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. LXXXIII, January 1978 (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas).

Budhananda, Swami, "Ramkrishna's Naren and Naren's Ramkrishna II", *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. XXXIII, February, 1978 (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas).

———, "Ramkrishna's Naren and Naren's Ramkrishna III", *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. LXXXIII, May 1978 (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas).

———, "Ramkrishna's Naren and Naren's Ramkrishna IV", *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. LXXXIII, June 1978 (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas.

Bhatta, S. Krishna, "Two Gems of Eternal Religion", *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. LXXXIII, July 1978, (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas).

Bhashyananda, Swami, "Must Religion Divide Mankind ?" *The Vedanta Kesari*, Vol. LXVII, No. 3, March 1980, (Ramkrishna Math, Madras).

Basu, Dr. Durga Das, "The Essence of Hinduism", *Hinduism : The World's oldest Faith*, No. 77, Summer 1977 (edited by Swami Purnanand, The Bharata Sevashram Sangh, London).

———, "The Essence of Hinduism", *Hinduism : The World's Oldest Faith*, No 79, Winter 1977 (The Bharata Sevasharam Sangh, London).

Chintamani, C.Y., "Ramkrishna Paramhansa", *The Vedanta Kesari, Ramkrishna Centenary Issue*, Feburary and March 1936 (Ramkrishna Math, Madras, 1936).

Chatterjee, Bhudar, "Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa", *The Vedanta Kesari, Ramkrishna Centenary Issue*, February and March 1936 (Ramkrishna Math, Madras, 1936).

Chandevarker, Sir Narayan, "Ramkrishna-Vivekananda", *The Vedanta Kesari, Ramkrishna Centenary Issue*, February and March 1936 (Ramkrishna Math, Madras, 1936).

Dutta, Ramchandra, "Is Ramkrishna an ordinary saint ?", *Prabuddha Bharata, Sri Ramkrishna Birth Centenary Number*, Vol. XLI, February 1936 (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas).

Dutta, Dr. Tapash Chandra Shankar, "Universalism of Swami Vivekananda in Theory and Practice", *The Vedanta Kesari*, Vol. LXVII, No. 7, January, 1980 (Ramkrishna Math, Madras).

Gupta, Nagendranath, "A Day with Ramkrishna Paramhansa", *The Vedanta Kesari, Sri Ramkrishna Centenary Issue*, February and March 1936 (Sri Ramkrishna Math, Madras, 1936).

Gambhirananda, Swami, "Dynamic Message of Swami Vivekananda", *Prabuddha Bharata,* Vol LXXXIII, February 1978 (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas).
Horrwitz, Prof. Earnest P., "Ramkrishna and Vivekananda", *The Vedanta Kesari, Sri Ramkrishna Centenary Issue,* February and March 1936 (Sri Ramkrishna Math, Madras, 1936).
Keyserling, Count Harmann, "Ramkrishna and What he Stands For", *The Vedanta Kesari, Sri Ramkrishna Centenary Issue,* February and March 1936 (Sri Ramkrishna Math, Madras, 1936).
Kulkarni, Prof. G.V., "What is True Religion ?" *The Mountain Path,* Vol. 17, No. II, April 1980 (Sri Ramanashram, Tiruvanumalai, S. India).
Lewis, Prof Leta Jane, "Swami Vivekananda's Image for Modern Man", *Prabuddha Bharata,* Vol LXXXII, January 1977 (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas).
Mazumdar, Pratapchandra "Paramhansa Ramkrishna", *The Vedanta Kesari, Ramkrishna Centenary Issue,* February and March, 1936 (Sri Ramkrishna Math, Madras, 1936).
Maharaja, Swami Vireswaranandaji, "The Message of Ramkrishna-Vivekananda", *Prabuddha Bharata,* Vol. LXXXIII, July 1978 (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas).
Mukhyananda, Swami, "Religion and Society", *Prabuddha Bharata,* Vol. 85, January 1980 (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas).
——, "Religion and Society", *Prabuddha Bharata,* Vol. 85, February 1980 (Advaita Ashram, Himalayas).
Nag, Dr. Kalidas, "Ramkrishna Fellowship of Comparative Religion", *The Vedanta Kesari, Sri Ramkrishna Centenary Issue,* February and March 1936 (Sri Ramkrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1936).
Patwari, Prabhudas, "In the Midst of Darkness Light Persists", *The Vedanta Kesari,* Vol. LXVII, February 1980 (Sri Ramkrishna Math, Madras, 1980).
Reyana, Dr. Ruth, "The Dynamic Nature of Hinduism", *The World's Oldest Faith,* No. 77, Summer (The Bharat Sevashram Sangh, London Branch).
Sebapathipillai, S., "A Few Facts About Hinduism", *Hinduism—The World's Oldest Faith,* No. 79, Winter 1977 (The Bharata Sevashram Sangh, London Branch).
Stace, W.T., "Metaphysics and Meaning", *Mind,* Vol. XLIV,

No 176, October, 1935.

Tapasyananda, Swami, "Pariprasna", *The Vedanta Kesari*, Vol. LXVII, No 3, March 1980 (Sri Ramkrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras)

Upadhyaya, Brahmabandhava, "Sri Ramkrishna", *The Vedanta Kesari, Sri Ramkrishna Centenary Issue*, February and March, 1936 (Ramkrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras).

The Encyclopaedias

Edited by Yust, Waltur, "The Encyclopaedia Britannica", 1768, Vol II, VIII and 19th University of Chicago, 1947.

Edited by Hastings James with Selvic, John A and Gray, Louis H., "The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics", Vol IX and X T. and T Clark, New York, Fourth Impression, December, 1956

Edited by Seligman, Edvin, R A. and Johnson, Alvin, "The Encyclopaedia of Social Science", Vol. I, V and VI, The Macmillan Company, New York, Fifteenth Printing, 1963.

INDEX